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AN ITALIAN TALE

WITH

THREE DRAMATIC SCENES

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

BARRY CORNWALL

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The story of 'Marcian Colonna' is fictitious; but the catastrophe was suggested by a paper which appeared in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, entitled, 'An Extract from Gosschen's Diary.' My original intention was to paint the fluctuations of a fatalist's mind,—touched with insanity—alternately raised by kindness and depressed by neglect or severity —ameliorated by the contemplation of external nature, and generally influenced by the same causes which operate on more healthful temperaments. This intention has been in some measure departed from, and the story gradually took the form in which it now stands. The

incidents were invented: yet, it may be as well to state that when the tale was near its completion, I read in Forsyth's Travels, the account of a Princess Pignatelli, whose misfortunes closely resemble those of the heroine of Marcian Colonna.

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MARCIAN COLONNA.

PART THE FIRST.

MARCIAN COLONNA.

PART THE FIRST.

"Long years of outrage, calumny, and wrong;
Imputed madness, prison'd solitude,
And the mind's canker, in its savage mood."
LAMENT OF TASSO.

I.

For ever and for ever shalt thou be
Unto the lover and the poet dear,
Thou land of sunlit skies and fountains clear,
Of temples, and gray columns, and waving woods,
And mountains, from whose rifts the bursting floods
Rush in bright tumult to the Adrian sea:
O thou romantic land of Italy!
Mother of painting and sweet sounds!—tho' now
The laurels are all torn from off thy brow—
Yet, tho' the shape of Freedom now no more
May walk in beauty on thy piny shore,

Shall I, upon whose soul thy poets' lays
And all thy songs and hundred stories fell,
Like dim Arabian charms, break the soft spell
That bound me to thee in mine earlier days?
Never, divinest Italy!—thou shalt be
For aye the watchword of the heart to me.

II.

Famous thou art, and shalt be through all time:
Not that because thine iron children hurled,
Like arrows o'er the conquest-stricken world,
Their tyrannies,—but that, in a later day,
Great spirits, and gentle too, triúmphing came,
And, as the mighty day-star makes its way
From darkness into light, they toward their fame
Went, gathering splendor till they grew sublime.

Yet first of all thy sons were they who wove
Thy silken language into tales of love,
And fairest far the gentle forms that shine
In thy own poets' faery songs divine.

Oh! long as lips shall smile or pitying tears
Rain from the eyes of beauty,—long as fears
Or doubts or hopes shall sear or soothe the heart,
Or flatteries softly fall on woman's ears,
Or witching words be spoke at twilight hours,
Or tender songs be sung in orange bowers:
Long as the stars, like ladies' looks, by night
Shall shine,—more constant and almost as bright:
So long, tho' hidden in a foreign shroud,
Shall Dante's mighty spirit speak aloud;
So long the lamp of fame on Petrarch's urn
Shall, like the light of learning, duly burn;
And he be loved—he with his hundred tales,
As varying as the shadowy cloud that sails
Upon the bosom of the April sky,
And musical as when the waters run
Lapsing thro' sylvan haunts deliciously.
Nor may that gay romancer who hath told
Of knight, and damsel, and enchantments old,
So well, be e'er forgot; nor he who sung
Of Salem's holy city, lost and won,
The seer-like Tasso, who enamoured hung

On Leonora's beauty, and became
Her martyr,—blasted by a mingled flame.

The masters of the world have vanished, and
Thy gods have left or lost their old command;
The painter and the poet now have fled,
And slaves usurp the seat of Cæsar dead:
Prison and painted palace hast thou still,
But filled with creatures whom mere terrors kill;
Afraid of life and death they live and die
Eternally, and slay their own weak powers,
And hate the past, and dread the future time,
And while they steal from pleasure droop to crime,
Plucking the leaves from all the rosy hours.
Alas, alas, beautiful Italy!
—Yet he who late hath risen like a star
Amongst us (now by the Venice waves afar
He loiters with his song,) hath writ of thee,
And shared his laurell'd immortality
With thy decaying fortunes. Murmur not.
For me, with my best skill will I rehearse
My story, for it speaks of thine and thee:

It is a sad and legendary verse,
And thus it runs :———

III.

There is a lofty spot
Visible amongst the mountains Appennine,
Where once a hermit dwelt, not yet forgot
He or his famous miracles divine ;
And there the Convent of Laverna stands
In solitude, built up by saintly hands,
And deemed a wonder in the elder time ;
Chasms of the early world are yawning there,
And rocks are seen, craggy, and vast, and bare,
And many a dizzy precipice sublime,
And caverns dark as Death, where the wild air
Rushes from all the quarters of the sky :
Above, in all his old regality,
The monarch eagle sits upon his throne,
Or floats upon the desert winds, alone.
There, belted 'round and 'round by forests drear,
Black pine, and giant beech, and oaks that rear

Their brown diminished heads like shrubs between,
And guarded by a river that is seen
Flashing and wandering thro' the dell below,
Laverna stands.——It is a place of woe,
And, 'midst its cold dim aisles and cells of gloom,
The pale Franciscan meditates his doom.
An exile from his kind, save some sad few
(Like him imprison'd and devoted,) who,
Deserting their high natures for the creed
A bigot fashioned in his weaker dreams,
Left love and life, (yet love is life, indeed,)
And all the wonders of the world,—its gleams
Of joy, of sunshine, fair as those which spring
From the great poet's high imagining,
Sounds, and gay sights, and woman's words which bless
And carry on their echoes happiness,—
Left all that man inherits, and fell down
To worship in the dust, a demon's crown:
For there a phantom of a fearful size,
Shaped out of shadow and cloud, and nursed in pain,
And born of doubt and sorrow, and of the brain

The ever evil spirit, mocks man's eyes;
And they who worship it are cold and wan,
Timid and proud, envying while they despise
The wealth and wishes of their fellow man.

IV.

Amongst the squalid crowd that lingered there,
Mocking with empty forms and hopeless prayer
Their bounteous God, was one of princely race—
The young COLONNA,—in his form and face
Honoring the mighty stem from which he sprung.
Born amidst Roman ruins, he had hung
O'er every tale of sad antiquity,
And on its fallen honors, once so high,
Had mused like one who hoped. His soul had gone
Into the depth of ages, and had brought
From thence strange things and tidings, such as none
Or few e'er dream of now; and then he thought
That somewhat of the spirit old might be
Still living in the land—perhaps might haunt
The temples still; and often silently

He wandered thro' the night, and loved to hear
The winds come wailing by the tombs, and see
The thistle stagger and the ivy sere
Shake in the blast—she who triumphantly
Hangs her black tresses, like a rustling pall,
O'er grave and arch alike, and preys on all.

He was the youngest of his house, and from
His very boyhood a severer gloom
Than such as marks the child, gathered and grew
Around him, like an overshadowing veil;
And yet at times—(often) when some sad tale
Was told, from out that seeming darkness flew
Flashes of mind and passion, and his eye
Burned with the lightning of his brain, and then
He spoke more proudly; yet, by many men,
(Who some ancestral taint had not forgot,)
MARCIAN was shunned from very infancy,
And marked and chartered for the madman's lot.

V.

At home he met neglect, and fear abroad,
And so life grew, early, a heavy load.
Studious he was, and on the poet's page
Had pored beyond the feeling of his age,
And war, and high exploit, and knightly worth,
And fiery love, and dark and starry themes
Fed, with distemper'd food, the aching dreams
That haunted all his hours, and gave birth
To thirst of enterprize and wishes vain
Which died as they arose,—in pride and pain.

For he was doomed by a father's will to wear
The sullen cowl, and was forbid to share
The splendour of an elder brother's fate;
And therefore came distrust and bitter hate,
And envy, like the serpent's twining coil,
Ran 'round his heart and fixed its station there,
And thro' his veins did lurking fevers boil
Until they burst in madness;—then his mind
Became, at last, as is that languid wind

That floats across the calm blue sea, and falls
And rises o'er the Coliseum's walls,
And he like that great ruin.—In this hour
Of misery, when the soul had lost its power,
When memory slept, and that blank idiot air,
More hideous than death—to which despair
Is nothing, nor remorse—came smiling o'er
His features, they (his cautious parents) bore
The youth unto Laverna. By the shore
Of the blue dashing Mediterranean seas
They travell'd, and at times when the swift breeze
Came playing 'round his brows, a sadness crept
Silently o'er his eye, and then he sighed
Like one who thought, and when the soft wind died
He listened to its gentle fall, and wept.
They noted not the change, but bore him on
Unto his convent prison, and their gold
Stamped with the weight of truth the tale they told;
And there they left him to his fate,—alone.

VI.

They left him to his prison, and then returned ;
And festal sounds were heard, and songs were sung,
And all around the walls were garlands hung
As usual, and gay censers brightly burned
In the Colonna palace. He was missed
By none, and when his mother fondly kissed
Her eldest born, and bade him on that day
Devote him to the dove-eyed Julia,
The proud Vitelli's child, Rome's paragon,
She thought no longer of her cloistered son.

On that same night of mirth Vitelli came
With his fair child, sole heiress of his name,—
She came amidst the lovely and the proud,
Peerless ; and when she moved, the gallant crowd
Divided, as the obsequious vapours light
Divide to let the queen-moon pass by night:
Then looks of love were seen, and many a sigh
Was wasted on the air, and some aloud
Talked of the pangs they felt and swore to die :—

She, like the solitary rose that springs
In the first warmth of summer days, and flings
A perfume the more sweet because alone—
Just bursting into beauty, with a zone
Half girl's half woman's, smiled and then forgot
Those gentle things to which she answered not.
But when Colonna's heir bespoke her hand,
And led her to the dance, she question'd why
His brother joined not in that revelry:
Careless he turned aside and did command
Loudly the many instruments to sound,
And well did that young couple tread the ground:
Each step was lost in each accordant note,
Which thro' the palace seemed that night to float
As merrily, as tho' the Satyr-god
With his inspiring reed, (the mighty Pan,)
Had left his old Arcadian woods, and trod
Piping upon the shores Italian.

Again she asked in vain: yet, as he turned
(The brother) from her, a fierce colour burned
Upon his cheek, and fading left it pale
As death, and half proclaimed the guilty tale.

—She dwelt upon that night till pity grew
Into a wilder passion: the sweet dew
That linger'd in her eye 'for pity's sake,'
Was—(like an exhalation in the sun)
Dried and absorbed by love. Oh! love can take
What shape he pleases, and when once begun
His fiery inroad in the soul, how vain
The after-knowledge which his presence gives!
We weep or rave, but still he lives and lives,
Master and lord, 'midst pride and tears and pain.

VII.

Now may we seek Colonna. When he found
Himself a prisoner in his cell, and bound,
And saw the eye-less skull and glass of sand
And ghastly crucifix before him, he
'Rose with a sudden shriek and burst the band
That tied him to his pallet, and stood free:
Not thus alone he stood, for the wild shock
Darted upon his brain and did unlock
The gates of memory, and from his soul

Gradual he felt the clouds of madness roll,
And with his mind's redemption every base
And darker passion fled—shrunk 'fore its light,
As at the glance of morning shrinks the night.
Not suddenly,—but slow, from day to day,
The shadow from his spirit passed away,
And sometimes would return, at intervals,
As blight upon the opening blossom falls.
—And then he pondered in his prison place,
On many an awful theme ne'er conn'd before,
Of darkness and decay, and of that shore
Upon whose shadowy strand pale spirits walk,
'Tis said, for many ages, and would talk
Right eloquent with every monk who there
Boasted of penitence, and felt despair,
In whose dull eye Hope shone not, and whose breath
Was one unvaried tale of Death and Death.

VIII.

But in his gentler moments he would gaze,
With something of the love of earlier days,

On the far prospects, and on summer morns
Would wander to a high and distant peak,
Against whose rocky bosom the clouds break
In showers upon the forests. It adorns
The landscape, and from out a pine-wood high,
Springs like a craggy giant to the sky.
Here, on this summit of the hills, he loved
To lie and look upon the world below ;
And almost did he wish at times to know
How in that busy world man could be moved
To live for ever—what delights were there
To equal the fresh sward and odorous air,
The valleys and green slopes, and the sweet call
Of bird to bird, what time the shadows fall
Toward the west:—yet something there must be
He felt, and that he now desired to see.

As once he pondered there, on the far world,
And on himself, like a lone creature hurled
From all its pleasures—its temptations, all,
Over his heart there fell, like a dark pall,
The memory of the past: he thought and thought,

'Till in his brain a busier spirit wrought,
And Nature then unlocked with her sweet smile
The icy barrier of his heart, and he
Returned unto his first humanity.
He felt a void, and much he grieved the while,
Within his heart, as tho' he wished to share
A joy he knew not with another mind;
Wild were his thoughts, but every wish refined,
And pure as waters of the mountain spring:
Was it the birth of Love?—did *he* unbind
(Like the far scent of wild flowers blossoming)
His perfumed pinions in that rocky lair,
To save a heart so young from perishing there?—

IX.

Some memory had he of Vitelli's child,
But gathered where he now remembered not;
Perhaps, like a faint dream or vision wild,
(Which, once beheld, may never be forgot,)
She floated in his fancy; and when pain
And fevers hot came thronging round his brain,

Her shape and voice fell like a balm upon
His sad and dark imagination.
A gentle minister she was, when he
Saw forms, 'twas said, which often silently
Passed by his midnight couch, and felt at times
Strange horror for imaginary crimes,
(Committed, or to be,) and in his walk
Of Fate and Death, and phantom things would talk.
Shrieks scared him from his sleep, and figures came
On his alarmed sight, and thro' the glades,
When evening filled the woods with trembling shades,
Followed his footsteps; and a star-like flame
Floated before his eyes palely by day,
And glared by night and would not pass away.
—At last his brother died. Giovanni fell
A victim in a cause he loved too well;
And the Colonna prince, without his heir,
Bethought him of the distant convent, where
A child had been imprison'd, that he might gain
Riches for one he better lov'd:—How vain,

And idle now! Dead was the favoured son,
And sad the father,—but the crime was done.

X.

Then Marcian sought his home. A ghastly gloom
Hung o'er the pillars and the wrecks of Rome,
And scarcely, as the clouds were swiftly driven
In masses shrouding the blue face of heaven,
Was seen, by tremulous glimpses, the pale moon,
Who looked abroad in fear and vanished soon.
The winds were loud amongst the ruins, where
The wild weeds shook abroad their ragged hair,
And sounds were heard, like sobs from some lone man,
And murmuring 'tween his banks the Tyber ran.
In the Colonna palace there were tears
Flowing from aged eyes that seldom wept;
Their son was gone—the hope of many years
Cold in his marble home for ever slept.
—The father met his child: with tremulous grasp
He pressed his hand, and he returned the clasp,

And spoke assuring words—‘ that he was come
‘ To soothe his grief and cheer his desolate home,’
And then he bade him quite forget the past.
Thus hand in hand they sate awhile; at last
A deep deep sob came bursting from the gloom
That hid the far part of the palace room,
And, after, all was silent as the grave.
Colonna 'rose, and by the lamp that gave
A feeble light, saw, like a shape of stone,
His mother couching in the dusk, alone:
Her hand was clenched, and her eye wandered wild
Like one who lost and sought, (in vain,) a child;
And now and then a smile, but not a tear,
Told that she fancied still her darling near;
And then she shook her head and crossed her arms
Over her breast, and turned her from the light,
And seemed as tho' she muttered inward charms,
To scare some doubtful phantom from her sight.
He spoke to her in vain: her heart was filled
With grief, and every passion else was stilled,
Was buried,—lost. Just as the mighty rains
Which, gathering, flood the valleys in the days

Of Autumn, or as rivers when snow decays
Sweep all things in their course, 'till nought remains
Distinguishable,—earth, and roots, and grass,
And stones, and casual things, a mingled mass,
Driven onwards by the waters, and o'erborne
'Till but the stream is seen: So they who mourn
Deeply, and they, 'tis said, who love the best
In one wild mastering passion lose the rest.

XI.

At last, the woes that wrapped the mother 'round
Broke and dissolved, and a serener day
Shone on her life; but never more the sound
Of noisy mirth or festal music gay
Was heard within Colonna's walls,—and yet
A calm and pleasant circle often met,
And the despised, neglected Marcian now
Wore the descended honours on his brow.
Unlike he was in boyhood,—yet so grave
They doubted sometimes if he quite forgave
The past; and then there played a moody smile

About his mouth, and he at times would speak
Of one with heavenly bloom upon her cheek,
Whose vision did his convent hours beguile;
A phantom shape, and which in sleep still came
And fanned the colour of his cheek to flame.
Sometimes has he been known to gaze afar
Watching the coming of the evening star,
And as it progress'd toward the middle sky,
Like the still twilight's lonely deity,
Would fancy that a spirit resided there,
A gentle spirit and young, with golden hair,
And eyes as blue as the blue dome above,
And a voice as tender as the sound of love.

XII.

Some months thus passed among the wrecks of Rome,
And seldom thought he of the fearful doom
On which he used to ponder: still he felt
That he alone amidst the many dwelt,
Lonely; but why he cared not, or forgot

The jibings cast upon his early lot.
—One morning as he lay half listlessly
Within the shadow of a column, where
His forehead met such gusts of cooling air
As the bright summer knows in Italy,
A gorgeous cavalcade went thundering by,
Dusty and worn with travel: As it passed
Some said the great Count had returned, at last,
From his long absence upon foreign lands:
'Twas told that many countries he had seen,
(He and his lady daughter,) and had been
A long time journeying on the Syrian sands,
And visited holy spots, and places where
The Christian roused the Pagan from his lair,
And taught him charity and creeds divine,
By spilling his bright blood in Palestine.

XIII.

Vitelli and his child returned at last,
After some years of wandering. Julia
Had been betrothed and widow'd: she had passed

From bondage into liberty, and they
Who knew the bitter husband she had wed,
Rejoiced to learn that he indeed was dead.
She had been sacrificed in youth, to one
She never loved; but he she loved was gone,
And so it matter'd not: 'tis true some tears
Stained her pale cheek at times in after years,
And much unkindness from the man on whom
She had bestowed her beauty, drew a gloom
Around her face, and curtained up in shade
The eyes that once like sunny spirits played.
But he was dead:—Sailing along the sea,
His pleasure barque was gliding pleasantly,
When sudden winds arose, and mighty waves
Were put in motion, and deep yawning graves
Opened on every side with hideous roar:
He screamed and struggled, and was seen no more.
This was the tale.—Orsini's titles fell
Upon a student youth, scarce known before,
Who took the princely name and wore it well.

XIV.

And Julia saw the youth she loved again:
But he was now the great Colonna's heir,
And she whom he had left so young and fair,
A few short years ago, was grown, with pain
Of thoughts unutter'd (a heart-eating care,)
Pale as a statue. When he met her first
He gazed and gasped as tho' his heart would burst.
Her figure came before him like a dream
Revealed at morning, and a sunny gleam
Broke in upon his soul and lit his eye
With something of a tender prophecy.
And was she then the shape he oft had seen,
By day and night,—she who had such strange power
Over the terrors of his wildest hour?
And was it not a phantom that had been
Wandering about him? Oh with what deep fear
He listened now, to mark if he could hear
The voice that lulled him,—but she never spoke;
For in her heart her own young love awoke
From its long slumber, and chained down her tongue,

And she sate mute before him: he, the while,
Stood feasting on her melancholy smile,
Till o'er his eyes a dizzy vapour hung
And he rushed forth into the freshning air,
Which kissed and played about his temples bare,
And he grew calm. Not unobserved he fled,
For she who mourned him once as lost and dead,
Saw with a glance, as none but women see,
His secret passion, and home silently
She went rejoicing, 'till Vitelli asked
'Wherefore her spirit fell,'—and then she tasked
Her fancy for excuse wherewith to hide
Her thoughts and turn his curious gaze aside.

XV.

That fateful day passed by; and then there came
Another and another, and the flame
Of love burned brightly in Colonna's breast,
But while it filled it robbed his soul of rest:
At home, abroad, at morning, and at noon

In the hot sultry hours, and when the moon
Shone in the cool fresh sky, and shaped those dim
And shadowy figures once so dear to him,—
Wheree'er he wandered, she would come upon
His mind, a phantom like companion;
Yet, with that idle dread with which the heart
Stifles its pleasures, he would ever depart
And loiter long amongst the streets of Rome,
When she, he feared, might visit at his home.
A strange and sad perverseness; he did fear
To part with that pale hope which shone at last
Glimmering upon his fortunes. Many a year
Burthen'd with evil o'er his head had passed,
And stamped upon his brow the marks of care,
And so he seemed as old before his time:
And many would pretend that in his air
There was a gloom that had its birth in crime.
—'Tis thus the wretched are trod down. Despair
Doth strike as deep a furrow in the brain,
As mischief or remorse; and doubt will pain
And sear the heart like sin accomplished.

But slander ever hath hung upon the head
Of silent sorrow, and corroding shame
Preys on its heart, and its defenceless name
Is blotted by the bad, until it flies
From the base world a willing sacrifice.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

MARCIAN COLONNA.

PART THE SECOND.

MARCIAN COLONNA.

PART THE SECOND.

"Love surely hath been breathing here."
SYBILLINE LEAVES.

"We will leave them to themselves,
To the moon and the stars, these happy elves,
To the murmuring wave and the zephyr's wing,
That dreams of gentlest joyance bring,
To bathe their slumbering eyes."
ISLE OF PALMS.

I.

Oh POWER of Love so fearful and so fair—
Life of our life on earth, yet kin to care—
Oh! thou day-dreaming Spirit, who dost look
Upon the future, as the charmed book
Of Fate were open'd to thine eyes alone—
Thou who dost cull, from moments stolen and gone
Into eternity, memorial things
To deck the days to come—thy revellings
Were glorious and beyond all others: Thou
Didst banquet upon beauty once; and now
The ambrosial feast is ended!—Let it be.

Enough to say '*It was.*'—Oh! upon me
From thy o'ershadowing wings etherial
Shake odorous airs, so may my senses all
Be spell-bound to thy service, beautiful power,
And on the breath of every coming hour
Send me faint tidings of the things that were,
And aid me as I try gently to tell
The story of that young Italian pair,
Who loved so lucklessly, yet ah! so well.

II.

How long Colonna in his gloomier mood
Remained, it matters not: I will not brood
On evil themes; but, leaving grief and crime,
At once I pass unto a blyther time.
—One night—one summer night he wandered far
Into the Roman suburbs; Many a star
Shone out above upon the silent hours,
Save when, awakening the sweet infant flowers,
The breezes travell'd from the west, and then
A small cloud came abroad and fled again.

The red rose was in blossom, and the fair
And bending lily to the wanton air
Bared her white breast, and the voluptuous lime
Cast out his perfumes, and the wilding thyme
Mingled his mountain sweets, transplanted low
'Midst all the flowers that in those regions blow.
—He wandered on: At last, his spirit subdued
By the deep influence of that hour, partook
E'en of its nature, and he felt imbued
With a more gentle love, and he did look
At times amongst the stars, as on a book
Where he might read his destiny. How bright
Heaven's many constellations shone that night!
And from the distant river a gentle tune,
Such as is uttered in the months of June,
By brooks, whose scanty streams have languished long
For rain, was heard;—a tender, lapsing song,
Sent up in homage to the quiet moon.

III.

He mused, 'till from a garden, near whose wall
He leant, a melancholy voice was heard
inging alone, like some poor widow bird
That casts unto the woods her desert call.
It was the voice—the very voice that rung
Long in his brain that now so sweetly sung.
He passed the garden bounds and lightly trod,
Checking his breath, along the grassy sod,
(By buds and blooms half-hidden, which the breeze
Had ravished from the clustering orange trees,)
Until he reached a low pavillion, where
He saw a lady pale, with radiant hair
Over her forehead and in garments white;
A harp was by her, and her fingers light
Carelessly o'er the golden strings were flung;
Then, shaking back her locks, with upward eye,
And lips that dumbly moved, she seemed to try
To catch an old disused melody—
A sad Italian air it was, which I

Remember in my boyhood to have heard,
And still—(tho' here and there perhaps a word
Be now forgot,) I recollect the song,
Which might to any lovelorn tale belong.

SONG.

Whither ah! whither is my lost love straying—
Upon what pleasant land beyond the sea?
Oh! ye winds now playing
Like airy spirits 'round my temples free,
Fly and tell him this from me:

Tell him, sweet winds, that in my woman's bosom
My young love still retains its perfect power,
Or, like the summer blossom,
That changes still from bud to the full-blown flower,
Grows with every passing hour.

Say (and say gently) that since we two parted,
How little joy—much sorrow I have known:
Only not broken-hearted
Because I muse upon bright moments gone,
And dream and think of him alone.

IV.

The lady ended, and Colonna knelt
Before her with outstretched arms: He felt
That she, whom in the mountains far away
His heart had loved so much, at last was his.
"Is there, oh! is there in a world like this"
(He spoke) "such joy for me? Oh! Julia,
Art thou indeed no phantom which my brain
Has conjured out of grief and desperate pain—
And shall I then from day to day behold
Thee again, and still again? Oh! speak to me,
Julia—and gently for I have grown old
In sorrow ere my time: I kneel to thee."
—Thus with a passionate voice the lover broke
Upon her solitude, and while he spoke

In such a tone as might a maiden move,
Her fear gave place to pride, and pride to love.
Quick are fond women's sights, and clear their powers,
They live in moments years, an age in hours;
Thro' every movement of the heart they run
In a brief period with a courser's speed,
And mark, decide, reject; but if indeed
They smile on us—oh! as the eternal sun
Forms and illuminates all to which this earth
(Impregnate by his glance) hath given birth,
Even so the smile of woman stamps our fates,
And consecrates the love it first creates.

V.

At first she listened with averted eye,
And then, half turning towards him, tenderly
She marked the deep sad truth of every tone,
Which told that he was hers, and all her own,
And saw the hectic flush upon his cheek,
(That silent language which the passions speak

So eloquently well,) and so she smiled
Upon him. With a pulse rapid and wild,
And eyes lit up with love, and all his woes
Abandoned or forgot, he lightly rose,
And placed himself beside her. "Julia!
My own, my own, for you are mine," he said;
Then on her shoulder drooped his feverish head,
And for a moment he seemed dying away:
But he recovered quick. "Oh! Marcian
I fear"—she softly sighed:—"Again, again;
Speak, my divinest love,—again, and shower
The music of your words which have such power,
Such absolute power upon my fainting soul—
Oh! I've been wandering toward that fearful goal,
Where Life and Death, Trouble and Silence meet,
(The Grave) with weak, perhaps with erring feet,
A long, long time without thee—but no more;
For can I think upon that shadowy shore,
Whilst thou art here standing beside me, sweet!"—
She spoke "Dear Marcian I"—"How soft she speaks,
He uttered: "Nay—" (and as the daylight breaks

Over the hills at morning was her smile,)
" Nay you must listen silently, awhile."

" Dear Marcian, you and I for many years
Have suffered: I have bought relief with tears;
But, my poor friend, I fear a misery
Beyond the reach of tears has weighed on thee.
What 'tis I know not, but (now calmly mark
My words) 'twas said that—that thy mind was dark,
And the red fountains of thy blood, (as Heaven
Is stained with the dying lights of Even,)
Were tainted—that thy mind did wander far,
At times, a dangerous and erratic star,
Which like a pestilence sweeps the lower sky,
Dreaded by every orb and planet nigh.
This hath my father heard. Oh! Marcian,
He is a worldly and a cruel man,
And made me once a victim; but again
It shall not be. I have had too much of pain,
Too much for such short hours as life affords,
And I would fain from out the golden hoards
Of joy, pluck some fair ornament, at last,
To gild my life with—but *my* life hath past."

Her head sank on her bosom: gently he
Kissed off the big bright tears of misery.
Alas! that ever such glittering drops should flow
(Bright as tho' born of Happiness,) from woe!
—He soothed her for a time, and she grew calm,
For lovers' language is the surest balm
To hearts that sorrow much: that night they parted
With kisses and with tears, but both light hearted,
And many a vow was made, and promise spoke,
And well believed by both and never broke:
They parted, but from that time often met,
In that same garden when the sun had set,
And for awhile Colonna's mind forgot,
In the fair present hour, his future lot.

VI.

To those o'er whom pale Destiny with his sting
Hangs, a mere glance, a word, a sound will bring
The bitter future with its terrors, all
Black and o'erwhelming. Like Colonna's star,
Tho' hidden for awhile or banish'd far,

The time *will* come,—at prayer or festival,
Slumber or morning sport or mid-day task ;
The soul can never fly itself, nor mask
The face of fate with smiles.———
How oft by some strange ill of body or mind
Man's fine and piercing sense is stricken blind ;
No matter then how slight the shadows be,
The veil is thick to him who cannot see.
Solid and unsubstantial, false and true,
Are Fear and Fate ; but to that wretched few,
Who call the dim phantasmas from their graves,
And bow before their own creations, slaves,
They are immortal—holy—fix'd—supreme.
—No more of this. Now pass I to my theme.

VII.

The hours passed gently,—even happily
Awhile ; tho' sometimes o'er Colonna's brow
There shone a meaning strange, as tho' his doom
Flashed like a light across his memory,
And left behind a momentary gloom :

This would he smile away, and then forget,
And then again, sighing, remember: yet,
Over pale Julia's face that shadow cast
A shadow like itself, and when it passed
Its sad reflection vanished. Lovers' eyes
Bright mirrors are where Love may look and see
Its gladness, grief, beauty, deformity,
Pictured in all their answering colours plain,
So long as the true life and Soul remain;
For when the substance shrinks the shadow flies.

Thus lived Colonna, 'till to common eyes
He seemed redeemed and rescued from despair;
And often would he catch the joyous air
Of the mere idler, and the past would seem,
To him and others, like a terrible dream
Dissolved: 'twas then a clearer spirit grew
In his black eye, and over the deep blue
Of Julia's a soft happier radiance hung,
Like the dark beauty from the starlight flung
Upon the world, which tells Heaven's breast is clear
Within, and that abroad no cloud is near.

VIII.

Once—only once—('twas in a lonely hour)
He felt the presence of his evil power
Weighing upon him, and he left his home
In silence, amidst fresher scenes to roam.
—'Twas said that he did wander far and wide
O'er desert heaths, and on the Latian plains
Bared his hot forehead to the falling rains,
Which there bring death ; and, with a heart allied
To gentle pleasures still, on the green hill's side
Would stretch his length upon the evening grass,
Shedding sweet tears to see the great sun pass
Away like a dream of boyhood. Darkness then
Grew his familiar, and in caverns deep,
(By the strange voice of silence lulled asleep,)
He oft' would hide himself within its arms ;
Or gaze upon the eyes of Heaven, when
She stands illustrious with her midnight charms
Revealed—all unobscured by moon or sun,
Gay-tincted cloud, or airy rainbow won
From light and showers ; and when storms were high

He listened to the Wind-God riding by
The mountain places, and there took his stand,
Hearkening his voice of triumph or command,
Or heard him thro' the piny forests rave,
Ere he went murmuring to his prison cave.

IX.

And then unto the rocks of Tivoli
He went: Alas! for gone Antiquity—
Its holy and mysterious temple where
The Sybil spread abroad her hoary hair,
And spoke her divine oracles. Her home
Is crumbling into dust, and sheeted foam
Now sparkles where her whitened tresses hung;
And where her voice, like Heaven's, was freely flung
Unto the echoes, now fierce torrents flow,
Filling with noise and spray the dell below.
Not useless are ye yet, ye rocks and woods
Of Tivoli, altho' long since have vanished
From your lost land its gorgeous palaces,
And tho' the spirit of the place be banished

The earth for ever—yet your silver floods
Remain, (immortal music!) and the breeze
Brings health and freshness to your waving trees.

X.

For weeks amongst the woods did Marcian rove
And wilds: At last, unto his widowed love
He came again, while yet the fever stained
His cheek and darkness on his brow remained.
She saw the hectic colour burning bright
Clouded by looks of sorrow, and one night—
It was a night of sultry summer weather,
And they were sitting in the garden where,
Guided by fate, and drawn like doves together,
They once had met, and meeting mocked at care,
And he first sank upon her bosom fair:
Her white and delicate fingers now by his
Were held and not withdrawn, and with a kiss
He thanked her, yet with idle question tried
To cheat away the grief she could not hide.
He felt that he had planted in her heart

The seeds of grief; and could he then depart
And leave the lady of his love in tears—
Weighed down (and for his sake) by silent fears?
He could not: Oh he felt the pleading look
Of her who loved him so, nor could he brook
Still to be thought a frantic. "Thou shalt know,
Dearest," he said, "my hidden story now;
Forgive me that before I told thee not:
I thought—I wished to think the thing forgot."
—He pondered then, as to regain a thought:
At length, with a firm tongue, (but mingling still
Much fancy with the fact, as madmen will,)
He told his tale—his dream:—

XI.

"From my sad youth
I never was beloved,—never. Truth
Fell mildew'd from my lips, and in my eye
Gloomed, it was said, the red insanity.
I was not mad—nor am; but I became
Withered by malice, and a clouded flame

Rose from my heart and made my eyesight dim,
And my brain turn, and palsied every limb,
And the world stood in stupor for a time.
Yet from my fiery cloud I heard of crime,
Of parents'—brother's hate, and of one lost
For want of kindness.—Then?—aye; then there came
The rushing of innumerable wings
By me, and sweets, such as the summer flings,
Fell on my fainting senses, and I crept
Into some night-dark place, and long I slept.
I slept, until a rude uneasy motion
Stirred me: what passed I know not then, and yet
Methought the air blew freshly, and the ocean
Danced with its bright blue waters: I forget
Where all this happened; but at last my brain
Seemed struggling with itself, awhile in vain.
There was a load on it, like hopeless care
Upon the mind—a dreary heavy load,
And, now and then, it seemed as shapes did goad
My soul to recollection,—or despair."

XII.

" Clearer and clearer now from day to day
The figures floated on my sight, but when
I moved they vanished. Then, a grim array,
Like spectres from the graves of buried men,
Came by in silence: each upon his face
Wore a wild look, as tho' some sad disgrace
Had stamped his life (or thus I thought) with sorrow.
They vanished too; but ever on the morrow
They came again, in greater sadness, 'till
I spoke; then one of them gave answer—shrill
As blasts that whistle thro' the dungeon's grate
On bleak December nights, when in her state
Comes the white Winter. ' Look!'—(I thus translate
The sounds it uttered)—' Look,' the phantom said,
' Upon thine ancestry departed—dead.
' Each one thou seest hath left his gaping tomb
' Empty, and comes to warn thee of thy doom:
' And each, whilst living, bore within his brain
' A settled madness: start not—so dost thou:
' Thou art *our own*, and on thy moody brow

‘ There is the invisible word ne’er writ in vain.
‘ Look on us all: we died as thou shalt die,
‘ The victims of our heart’s insanity.
‘ From sire to son the boiling rivers ran
‘ Thro’ every vein, and ’twas alike with all:
‘ It touched the child and trampled down the man;
‘ And every eye that, with its dead dull ball,
‘ Seems as it stared upon thee now, was bright
‘ As thine is, with the true transmitted light.
‘ Madness and pain of heart shall break thy rest,
‘ And she shall perish whom thou lovest the best.
‘ Once thou hast been a mockery unto men,
‘ But thus, at least, it shall not be again.
‘ Behold—where yon red rolling star doth shine
‘ From out the darkness: that fierce star is thine,
‘ Thy Destiny, thy Spirit, and its power
‘ Shall guard and rule thee to thy latest hour;
‘ And never shall it quit thy side, but be
‘ Invisible to all and dim to thee,
‘ Save when the fever of thy soul shall rise,
‘ And then that light shall flash before thine eyes,
‘ And thou shalt then remember that thy fate

' Is—*murder*.'—Thus upon the silence broke
The spectre's hollow words; but while it spoke,
Its pale lip never moved, nor did its eye
Betray intelligence. With sweeping state,
Over the ground the train then glided by,
And vanish'd—vanish'd. Then methought I 'woke."

XIII.

" It was no dream, for often since that hour
The star has flashed, and I *have* felt its power,
('Twas in my moodier moments,) and my soul
Seemed languishing for blood, and there did roll
Rivers of blood beside me, and my hands,
As tho' I had obeyed my Fate's commands,
Were smeared and sanguine, and my throbbing brow
Grew hot and blistered with the fire within,
And my heart withered with a secret sin,
And my whole heart was tempested: it grew
Larger methought with passion—even now
I feel it swell within me, and a flood
Of fiery wishes, such as man ne'er knew,

Seem to consume me. Sometimes I have stood
Looking at Heaven—for Hope, with these sad eyes,
In vain—for I was born a sacrifice.
What Hope was there for me, a murderer?
What lovely? nothing—yes I err, I err."

" Yes,—mixed with these wild visionings, a form
Descended, fragile as a summer cloud,
And with her gentle voice she stilled the storm:
I never saw her face, and yet I bowed
Down to the dust, as savage men, they say,
Adore the sun in countries far away.
I felt the music of her words like balm
Raining upon my soul, and I grew calm
As the great forest lion that lay down
At Una's feet, without a single moan,
Vanquish'd by love, or as the herds that hung
Their heads in silence when the Thracian sung.
—I never saw her,—never: but her voice
Was the whole world to me. It said 'Rejoice,
For I am come to love thee, youth, at last,
To recompence thy pains and sorrow past.

No longer now, amongst the mountains high,
Shalt thou over thy single destiny
Mourn: I am come to share it. I, whom all
Have worshipped like a shrine, have left the hall
Of my proud parents, and without a sigh,
Am come to roam by caverns and by floods,
And be a dweller with thee in the woods."

" —Here let me pause, for now I must not say,
How she, my gentle spirit, fades away;
And now, and now——Alas! and must I die,
The martyr of a crime I cannot shun?
What have I—what have my dead fathers done,
That thus from age to age a misery
Is seared and stamped upon us? Shall it be
For ever thus? It shall not. I will run
My race as fearless as the summer sun,
When clouds come not, and like his course above
Shall mine be here, below, all light and love."

XIV.

He ended, and with kisses sweet and soft
She recompensed his words, and bade him dwell
No more upon the past, but look aloft
And pray to Heaven; and yet she bade him tell
Again the story of that lady young,
Who o'er him in such dream like beauty hung.
" You saw her, Marcian—No ?"—" My love, my love,
My own," he said, " 'twas thou, my forest dove,
Who soothed me in the wilderness, and crept
Into my heart, and o'er my folly wept
From dusky evening to the streaming morn,
Showers of sparkling tears. Oh! how forlorn
Was I without thee. Should I lose thee now—"
" Away, away," she said, and on his brow
Pressed her vermillion lips, and drew his hair
Aside and kissed again his forehead fair.
" Come, thou shalt lie upon—aye, on my breast,
And I will sing thee into golden rest."

XV.

Thus talked they, follying, as lovers will ;
A pleasant pastime,—and when worldly pain
Comes heavily on us, it is pleasant still
To read of this in song : it brings again
The hours of youth before man's jaded eye,
Spreading a charm about him, silently.
—Oh ! never shall thy name, sweet Poesy,
Be flung away, or trampled by the crowd
As a thing of little worth, while *I* aloud
May—(with a feeble voice indeed) proclaim
The sanctity, the beauty of thy name.
Thy grateful servant am I, for thy power
Has solaced *me* thro' many a wretched hour ;
In sickness—aye, when frame and spirit sank,
I turned me to thy chrystal cup and drank
Intoxicating draughts. Faithfullest friend,
Most faithful—perhaps best—when none were nigh
Unto thy green recesses did I send
My thoughts, and freshest rills of poesy
Came streaming all around from fountains old :

And so I drank and drank, and haply told
How thankful was I unto the night wind
Alone,—a cheerless confidant, but kind.

And now, Colonna, and sweet Julia,
A few few words to ye: If I have sung
Imperfectly your loves, or idly hung
Upon your griefs, forgive it. One fair day
Shone on your lives and lingered, yet—and yet
I now must pass what I may ne'er forget.
—Thou bright and hymeneal Star, whose wane
(For thou alone canst never rise again,)
Is as the dark declining of the soul,
Roll gently over youth and beauty—roll
In thy so sweet and silent course along,
A soft sigh only thy companion-song:
In all the light of love I leave thee now,
Unclouded and sublime. Upon the brow
Of each shed thy soft influence—calm, not gay:
For me,—a word I'll speak, and then—away.

XVI.

Sleep softly, on your bridal pillows, sleep,
Excellent pair! happy and young and true;
And o'er your days, and o'er your slumbers deep
And airy dreams, may Love's divinest dew
Be scatter'd like the April rains of Heaven:
And may your tender words, whispered at even,
Be woven into music; and, as the wind
Leaves when it flies a sweetness still behind,
When distant, may each silver sounding tone
Weigh on the other's heart, and bring (tho' gone)
The absent back; and may no envy sever
Your joys, but may each love—be loved for ever.

* * * * * * * *

Now, as I write, lo! thro' my window streams
The midnight moon —crescented Dian, who
'Tis said once wandered from her wastes of blue,
And all for love; filling a shepherd's dreams
With beauty and delight. He slept, he slept,
And on his eyelids white the huntress wept

Till morning; and looked thro', on nights like this,
His lashes dark, and left her dewy kiss.—
But never more upon the Latmos hill
May she descend to kiss that forest boy,
And give—receive gentle and innocent joy,
When clouds are distant far, and winds are still:
Her bound is circumscribed, and curbed her will.
—Those were immortal stories:—are they gone?
The pale queen is dethroned. Endymion
Hath vanished; and the worship of this earth
Is bowed to golden gods of vulgar birth.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

MARCIAN COLONNA.

PART THE THIRD.

MARCIAN COLONNA.

PART THE THIRD.

> " The tale I follow to its last recess
> Of suffering and of peace."—
> VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA.

I.

FAREWELL unto the valleys and the shores
Lashed by the sounding sea: awhile farewell
To every haunted fountain, lawny dell,
And piny wood thro' which the night wind roars—
And oh! sweet Love, soon must I say farewell
Even to thee, and Happiness—gay flowers
Ye are who shew yourselves in sunny hours,
But die away before your buds are blown.
Life's earliest relics, in its spring-time strewn
Like wither'd weeds before the steps of Fate.
Frail, fading offerings,—yet ere I sate
Myself with sorrow, in a pleasant rhyme
Would I speak somewhat of a gentler time.

II.

Oh! full of languishment, too deep to last,
The bridal hours in happy beauty passed,
(The feather footed hours!)—and hoary Time
Smoothed his pale brow, and with a look sublime,
From out the stream of joy a measure quaffed,
And young Love shook his rosy wings and laughed.
Dance and Arcadian tale and sylvan song,
Which to those moments did of right belong,
Went round and then returned: the morning Sun
Met brighter eyes than e'er he glanced upon,
And evening saw them still the same, and night
Looked from her star-lit throne, on stars more bright.
The morn was given to tale, the noon to ease
And musing beneath shade of branching trees;
The night to slumber; but at evening gray,
When the too fiery Sun had passed away,
Music was heard beneath the smiling moon,
Till midnight came, (it ever came too soon,)
And songs which lovers once were wont to sing
Of knight forlorn and lady triumphing;

And flowers that lie upon the breast of May,
Like gems, were plucked to fashion garlands gay,
And laurels green to deck the poet's head,
For then the bard was loved and honoured.
—Some lay beside a river lapsing clear,
And fancied Sylph or Naiad watching near,
While some of fabled Faun and Dryad told,
Or Fairy haunting well or fountain cold;
And ever and anon the fitful breeze
Came aiding those most gentle phantasies,
And died away, as voices by a lyre
(Touched by the trembling of its notes) expire.
—Around the lovers brows white roses hung,
And at their feet the wealth of spring was flung;
And they at times would sit apart and speak
Each to the other with a flushing cheek,
Or note the gentle look in maiden's eye,
Called up by lordly gallant whispering by.

III.

Fate was at hand—a snake amidst the flowers,
And looked and laughed upon the passing hours ;
And envy and pale hate then exiled far
Foretold the setting of Love's brighter star.
—Oh ! the deep sorrow of that weary day
When Marcian chanced, as he was wont, to stray
Scarce listening to the Tyber's gentle sound,
Yet winding as the mazy river wound.
At morn he left his home, and paced along,
Companion'd only by a heart-felt song,
That sprung like incense to the gates of Heaven.
By the gay fever of his spirit driven,
He travelled swiftly onwards ; but his sight
Was buried in deep thought : the enchantments bright
That lie amongst the clouds he noticed not,
And all the promise of the year forgot.
The golden fruitage from its grove of green
Looked out unheeded, and no longer seen
The sky-bird mounted toward the morning Sun,
And shrilly told aloft of day begun.

How he was wakened from that dreaming mood,
Alas, must now be known.—In the broad day
Marking the clear blue river roll away,
In squalid weeds a savage creature stood.
It is—it cannot be—Oh! Death and night!
Hath *he* come peering from his watery home,
Mocking and withering every human sight?
Hath dark Orsini still a power to roam?—
Dæmon or ghost or living thing he stands,
Staring with sullen eyes upon the sands,
As tho' he brooded o'er some wrong, or strove
To wreck on happier hearts the slights of love,
Like one escaped from toil, but fit for strife—
The last and lingering ill—the blight of life.

IV.

Colonna, sad Colonna—he hath fled
Wildly unto his home; there Julia lay
Upon her pillow slumbering, calm and gay
As sleep may be.—"The waves, the waves" he said,
"The sick sea-waters yawn and yield their dead—

The dead? he is alive: Peril nor pain
Death nor the grave would keep him in its bed.
The black Orsini is returned,—again."
" Marcian," she utter'd faintly, and a gleam
Played 'round her mouth: it was a happy dream.
" Thou lovely thing whom nature made so fair,
Young treasure of creation—must despair
Sear thy transcendent beauty, because thou
Wrapped thy sweet arms about a maniac's brow?
Julia! she sleeps, she sleeps; a happy sleep.
Oh why did I draw her within the sweep—
I—of my fiery star? It comes. I see
The comet red, which Fate, mine enemy,
Hath placed about me like a circle sure;
I cannot fly, and yet, shall I endure?
Endure—I must, evil and hate—I must,
And Hell, until I wither into dust:
That may be soon.—She moves poor wench. My love!
Hearest thou I call upon thee? My pale dove?
Still on my bosom, still." She woke: his eye
Rolled round and round, like one in misery,

Fearful to speak: But silence is not dumb,
And in his deep eloquent agony
She read strange fearful things. He whispered "Come—
We must be gone—" ("Be gone? dear Marcian!")
"Aye, quickly, for alas, we have no home
Nor refuge here. On land Italian
We must not build our hearths, nor hope to dwell
In safety now, from youth to age—"tis well
Perhaps 'tis well," she said—"And wilt thou go
On a long journey with me,—far away?
I may not tell thee now; but a dire foe
Has risen upon me. Wilt thou wander—say?"
("All the world over I—") "Oh! thou hast said
Comfort unto my soul," he uttered.
"Whilst I may lay my head upon thy breast,
It matters not; my Heaven is there—my rest.
Let the red star shine on, for I am thine—
Thine while I am: In darkness and dismay,
Here, or in wildernesses far away,
In poverty forlorn, or love divine,
In prisons or in freedom—aye, in death."
—He ceased, and straightway he was calm: his breath

Was in a moment stilled ; one gentle sigh
Came from pale Julia, but he trembled not,
For she was his—the rest was all forgot.
—That night they left the land of Italy.

V.

There was a tempest brooding in the air
Far in the west. Above, the skies were fair,
And the sun seemed to go in glory down :
One small black cloud (one only) like a crown,
Touched his descending disk and rested there.
Slow then it came along, to the great wind
Rebellious, and (although it blew and blew,)
It came increasing, and across the blue
Spread its dark shape, and left the sun behind
—The day-light sank, and the winds wailed about
The barque wherein the luckless couple lay,
And from the distant cloud came scattering out
Rivers of fire : it seemed as though the day
Had burst from out the billows, far away.
No pilot had they their small boat to steer

Aside from rocks, no sea-worn mariner
Who knew each creek and bay and sheltering steep,
And all the many dangers of the deep.
They fled for life, (for happiness is life,)
And met the tempest in his hour of strife,
Abroad upon the waters: they were driven
Against him by the angry winds of heaven:
And all around the clouds, the air, the sea
Rose from unnatural dead tranquillity,
And came to battle with their legions: Hail
Shot shattering down, and thunders roared aloud,
And the wild lightning from his dripping shroud
Unbound his arrowy pinions blue and pale,
And darted thro' the heavens: Below, the gale
Sang like a dirge, and the white billows lashed
The boat, and then like ravenous lions dashed
Against the deep wave-hidden rocks, and told
Of ghastly perils as they backward rolled.

VI.

The lovers, driven along from hour to hour,
Were helpless, hopeless, in the ocean's power.
—The storm continued, and no voice was heard,
Save that of some poor solitary bird,
Which sought a shelter on the quivering mast,
But soon borne off by the tremendous blast
Sank in the waters screaming. The great sea
Bared like a grave its bosom silently;
Then sank and panted like an angry thing,
With its own strength at war: The vessel flew
Towards the land, and then the billows grew
Larger and white, and roared as triumphing,
Scattering afar and wide the heavy spray
That shone like loose snow as it passed away.
—At first the dolphin and the porpoise dark
Came rolling by them, and the hungry shark
Followed the boat, patient and eager-eyed,
And the gray curlew slanting dipped her side
And the hoarse gull his wing within the foam;
But some had sank, the rest had hurried home.

And there pale Julia and her husband, clasped
Each in the other's arms, sate viewing Death:
She for his sake at times in terror gasped,
But he to cheer her kept his steady breath,
Talking of hope, and smiled like morning—There
They sate together in their sweet despair:
At times upon his breast she laid her head,
And he upon her silent beauty fed,
Hushing her fears—and 'tween her and the storm
Drew his embroidered cloak to keep her warm:
She thanked him with a look upturned to his,
The which he answered with a gentle kiss
Pressed and prolonged to pain. Her lip was cold;
And all her love and terror mutely told.—

VII.

O thou vast Ocean! Ever sounding Sea!
Thou symbol of a drear immensity!
Thou thing that windest round the solid world
Like a huge animal, which, downward hurl'd
From the black clouds, lies weltering and alone,
Lashing and writhing till its strength be gone.

Thy voice is like the thunder, and thy sleep
Is as a giant's slumber, loud and deep.
Thou speakest in the East and in the West
At once, and on thy heavily laden breast
Fleets come and go, and shapes that have no life
Or motion yet are moved and meet in strife.
The earth hath nought of this: no chance nor change
Ruffles its surface, and no spirits dare
Give answer to the tempest-waken air;
But o'er its wastes the weakly tenants range
At will, and wound its bosom as they go:
Ever the same, it hath no ebb, no flow;
But in their stated rounds the seasons come,
And pass like visions to their viewless home,
And come again, and vanish: the young Spring
Looks ever bright with leaves and blossoming,
And Winter always winds his sullen horn,
When the wild Autumn with a look forlorn
Dies in his stormy manhood; and the skies
Weep and flowers sicken when the Summer flies
—Thou only, terrible Ocean, hast a power,
A will, a voice, and in thy wrathful hour,
When thou dost lift thine anger to the clouds,

A fearful and magnificent beauty shrouds
Thy broad green forehead. If thy waves be driven
Backwards and forwards by the shifting wind,
How quickly dost thou thy great strength unbind,
And stretch thine arms, and war at once with Heaven.

Thou trackless and immeasureable Main!
On thee no record ever lived again
To meet the hand that writ it: line nor lead
Hath ever fathomed thy profoundest deeps,
Where haply the huge monster swells and sleeps,
King of his watery limit, who 'tis said
Can move the mighty ocean into storm—
Oh! wonderful thou art, great element:
And fearful in thy spleeny humours bent,
And lovely in repose: thy summer form
Is beautiful, and when thy silver waves
Make music in earth's dark and winding caves,
I love to wander on thy pebbled beach,
Marking the sunlight at the evening hour,
And hearken to the thoughts thy waters teach—
"Eternity, Eternity, and Power."

VIII.

And now—whither are gone the lovers now?
Colonna, wearest thou anguish on thy brow,
And is the valour of the moment gone?
Fair Julia, thou art smiling now alone:
The hero and the husband weeps at last—
Alas, alas! and lo! he stands aghast,
Bankrupt in every hope, and silently gasps
Like one who maddens. Hark! the timbers part
And the sea-billows come, and still he clasps
His pale pale beauty, closer to his heart,
The ship has struck. One kiss—the last—Love's own.
—They plunge into the waters and are gone.
The vessel sinks,—'tis vanished, and the sea
Rolls boiling o'er the wreck triumphantly,
And shrieks are heard and cries, and then short groans,
Which the waves stifle quick, and doubtful tones
Like the faint moanings of the wind pass by,
And horrid gurgling sounds rise up and die,
And noises like the choaking of man's breath—
— But why prolong the tale—it is of death.

IX.

—Years came and fled. To many Time was fraught
With joy—to some imperfect pleasures brought:
But to the Prince Colonna gray and old
A dull unchanging tale he ever told.
The children of his winter years were gone—
They lay, 'twas told, amongst the waters,—dead:
In the bright spirit of their youth they fled,
And left him, in his pallid age,—alone.
He wet the dust with bitter tears, and bowed
Before his idols, and vast treasures vowed
To saint or virgin from his coffers bright;
And often fiercely at the deep midnight
Would he do torture for his sin, and drank
Unto the very dregs the cup of pain.
With steel and stripe he wrought, until he sank
Beneath the bloody penance:—'twas in vain.
Remorse, Remorse—(a famished creature bred
From Sin, and feasting on its father dead,)
Sprang like a withering snake upon his heart.
It wrapped him in its fiery folds around:

It stung, and withered, but it had no sound:
And tho' he prayed and wept would not depart.

X.

The palace of his fathers, once so gay,
Was mossed and green and crumbling to decay:
The pillars yellowed in the marble halls,
And thro' the ruined casements the wild rains
Rushed with destroying wrath, and shapeless stains
Ran o'er, disfiguring, all the painted walls.
Few servants tended on their antient lord,
And mirthful revel, banished from his board,
Sought refuge with the humble. Song or sound
Echoed no more within the gallery's bound,
But in a lonely tower a lamp at times
Was seen, and startling thro' the silent air
Flew shrieks, as from a wretch whom many crimes
Had seared, and driven to life's last hold,—Despair.
—Friends passed, by one, and one, and one, away:
His foes grew glad; his brother's children gay
Cast dice for his domain, while bending low

Before the papal chair one whispered how
Report had gone abroad of some dark crime
Done by the old man in his early time,
And hinted of his vast possessions, which
Divided, might the holy church enrich,
And his contented heirs. The mitred king
Disdained to parley with so poor a thing;
Yet questioned the great prince, whose answers cold
Confirmed the story which the slanderer told.
And so he lived, (a perished shape,) like one
Lost in a lovely world—alone, alone.

XI.

And hath thy fiery planet then not set
Colonna?—When the winds and thunder met
In tumult, and around in many shapes
Death hovered with his dart, Fate turned aside
The arrows, laughing o'er the waters wide,
Till the sea trembled. Ah! but who escapes—
Who can escape from Fate? It frowned, and hung,
Darker than Death itself, the foreheads o'er

Of that sad pair, and when the billows flung
Their limbs in scorn upon the foamy shore,
Uprose the veering wind, and the next wave
Scarce touched the ringlet of Colonna's hair,
Which, streaming black upon the strand, lay there
The image of his fortunes—Dark and wild,
Neglected, torn,—with an unquiet grave
Open beside him, there Colonna smiled,
Or so it seemed, in death, but in his grasp
Still held the lost and lifeless Julia.
There, tempest-stricken—in each others clasp,
Beautiful on the sea-beat shore they lay:
Around her body were his arms enwove,
Her head upon his bosom, close as love.

XII.

They died not. Housed within a fisher's cot
Life dawned on them, and pain was soon forgot.
Time flew, and health returned and quietness,
And still i' the world they found enough to bless.
Colonna plied him in the fisher's trade;

And Julia watched his evening sail,—afraid
If but a crested wave was on the deep,
And if she heard the ocean billows sweep
Loudly along the shore, she looked on high,
And prophesied of storm and tempest nigh.
—One eve, returning home with shout and song,
The fishers plied their tossing boat along,
And Marcian at the helm the rudder guided,
And looked upon the waters, which divided
Beside the barque, seeming to rise and die,
Like short hours in a deep eternity.
He saw a menial standing on the strand,
Who, turning from a chart within his hand,
Looked round to note the place—Again—It was—
He saw—Orsini's slave—Alas, Alas!
Oh! Love, fair Love! is there no wilderness
For thee to hide thee in thy dark distress?
No haven and no hope, sweetest of all,
For thee to celebrate thy festival?
A sad short world is this, and yet thou hast
No home where thou may'st dream 'till life be past.
Tumult and strife and storm, and wild dismay,

Envy and hate,—and thus we pass away ;
And trample on the flowers that deck our road,
And goad ourselves, if others do not goad.

XIII.

No more in that lone hamlet were they seen :
But the remembrance of what once had been,
(Their deep and sad affection) still survived
Their going. They had lived, and gently lived
Amongst the wild and sea-beat mariners :
His eye was clearing to a calm, and hers
Troubled, but still at times, and always soft,
And her sweet voice, (like music heard aloft
By tender hermitess in rocky cell,
Or in dreams of love, at night,
By young and hopeless anchorite,)
Was after many a year remembered well.

They fled into the mountains. Night and day,
By strange and lonely paths they sought their way :
Wild as a creature in the forests born,

That spring on Asian sands, Colonna grew,
And with his burthen on his bosom flew,
Supporting, watching her from night to morn.
At last the chesnut groves and woods of pines
Frowned on them from the gloomy Appenines,
And then Colonna felt his bride was safe.
He placed her near Laverna in a cave,
High, overgrown and haunted, yet his sport
Had been to slumber there in former days,
And, from its dizzy height, he had loved to court
The breeze which ever o'er the mountains plays.
—Clad in his fisher's weeds, and with a brow
Bronzed by his sea-ward life, Colonna now
Went fearless to the convent, and would toil
For the pale monks and till their rocky soil,
And gain their bounty, (garments coarse, and food,)
Which he would carry to his cavern rude,
And feed the dove that lay within his nest,
And hush her every evening to her rest.

XIV.

At last she learned the tale—'Orsini—How!—
'Given up and banished from his grave, below—
'Orsini, dark Orsini!'—On her soul
The hollow words came like a thunder roll
Sounding at distance over hill and vale:
And Marcian marked her and his cheek grew pale,
And his hand trembled as he soothed her then,
And thro' his brain a terror flew again.
—Now paused he in his toil, and daily walk,
And in the gloom would often idly talk
Of poison and of blood, and tears would stream
In rivers down his cheeks when he did dream:
Sometimes in bitter spleen his tongue would chide,
And then, in anguish that he could not hide,
He wept and prayed her not to leave him there,
A lone man, in his madness—in despair.
And then he told her of his wretched youth,
And how upon her love and gentle truth
His life had rested;—yet, she did not speak,
Save in the pallid hues that sunk her cheek,

And in her heaving breast, and rayless eye
Which spoke of some fixed grief that would not fly.

" And will she leave me then, who loved her so—
(So utterly, beyond the love of men,)
And pass into a wretch's arms again,
From mine so true—from mine? she shall not—Oh!
Yet wherefore should I stay her, if her love
Be gone, indeed"—and then at times he strove
To think that he might live and she afar,
The beauty of his life, the hope, the star.
Oh! melancholy thought, and vain, and brief:
He felt that like the Autumn's perished leaf,
His frame would wither, and from its great height
His mind must sink, and lose itself, in night.

No talk was pleasant now; no image fair;
No freshness and no fragrance filled the air;
No music in the winds nor in the sound
The wild birds uttered from the forests round:
The sun had lost its light, and drearily
The morning stole upon his altered eye;

And night with all her starry eyes grew dim,
For *she* was changed,—and nought was true to him.

XV.

From pain—at length, from pain, (for could he bear
The sorrow burning wild without a tear?)
He rushed beside her: Towards him gloomily
She looked, and then he gasped—"We—list to me—
We—we must part,—must part: is it not so?"
She hung her head and murmured "Woe, oh! woe,
That it must be so—nay, Colonna—nay,
Hearken unto me: little can I say,
But sin—(is it not sin?) doth wear my heart
Away to death. Alas! and must we part,
We who have loved so long and truly?—yes;
Were we not born, (we were,) for wretchedness.
Oh! Marcian, Marcian, I must go: my road
Leads to a distant home, a calm abode,
There I may pine my few sad years away,
And die, and make my peace ere I decay—"

She spoke no more, for now she saw his soul
Rising in tumult, and his eyeballs roll
Wildly and fiery red, and thro' his cheek
Deep crimson shot: he sighed but did not speak.
Keeping a horrid silence there he sate,
A maniac, full of love, and death, and fate.
Again—the star that once his eye shone o'er
Flash'd forth again more fiercely than before:
And thro' his veins the current fever flew
Like lightning, withering all it trembled through
He clenched his hands and rushed away, away,
And looked and laughed upon the opening day,
And mocked the morn with shouts, and wandered wild
For hours, as by some meteor thing beguiled.
He wandered thro' the forests, sad and lone,
His heart all fiery and his senses gone;
Till, at the last, (for nature sank at last,)
The tempest of the fever fell and past,
And he lay down upon the rocks to sleep,
And shrunk into a troubled slumber, deep.
Long was that sleep—long—very long, and strange,

And frenzy suffered then a silent change,
And his heart hardened as the fire withdrew,
Like furnaced iron beneath the winter's dew.

XVI.

He gained—he gained (why droops my story?) then,
An opiate deadly from the convent men,
And bore it to his cave: she drank that draught
Of death, and he looked on in scorn, and laughed
With an exulting, terrible joy, when she
Lay down in tears to slumber, silently.
—She had no after sleep; but ere she slept
Strong spasms and pains throughout her body crept,
And round her brain, and tow'rds her heart, until
They touched that seat of love,—and all was still.
Away he wandered for some lengthened hour
When the black poison shewed its fiercest power,
And when he sought the cavern, there she lay,
The young, the gentle,—dying fast away.

He sate and watched her, as a nurse might do,
And saw the dull film steal across the blue,
And saw, and felt her sweet forgiving smile,
That, as she died, parted her lips the while.
Her hand?—its pulse was silent—her voice gone,
But patience in her smile still faintly shone,
And in her closing eyes a tenderness,
That seemed as she would fain Colonna bless.

She died, and spoke no word; and still he sate
Beside her like an image. Death and Fate
Had done what might be then: The morning sun
Rose upon him: on him?—his task was done.
The murderer and the murdered—one as pale
As marble shining white beneath the moon,
The other dark as storms, when the winds rail
At the chafed sea,—but not to calm so soon—
No bitterness, nor hate, nor dread was there;
But love still clinging round a wild despair,
A wintry aspect, and a troubled eye,
Mourning o'er youth and beauty, born to die.

Dead was she, and her mouth had fallen low,
But still he watched her with a stedfast brow:
Unaltered as a rock he sate, while she
Lay changed to clay, and perish'd. Drearily
Came all the hues of death across her face:
That look, so lovely once, had lost its grace,
The eye its light, the cheek its colour, now.
—Oh! human beauty, what a dream art thou,
That we should cast our life and hopes away,
On thee—and dost thou like a leaf decay,
In Spring-tide as in Autumn?—Fair and frail,
In bud or blossom, if a blight prevail,
How ready art thou from the world to fly;
And we who love thee so are left—to die.

XVII.

Fairest of all the world, thy tale is told:
Thy name is written in a record old,
And I from out the legend now rehearse,
Thy story, shaping it to softer verse.
And thou, the lost Colonna,—thou, whose brain
Was fever-struck with love and jealous pain,

A wanderer wast thou lonely thro' the earth?
Or didst thou tread, clad in thy pride of birth,
With high patrician step the streets of Rome?
I know not; no one knew. A heavy gloom,
Wrapped thy last fortunes, luckless Marcian!
—Some told in after times that he was found,
Dying within the Inquisition's bound;
Some said that he did roam, a wretched man,
In pilgrimage along the Arabian sands,
And some that he did dwell in the far lands
Of vast America, with savage men,
The chase his pastime, and his home a den.

What object is there now to know? what gain?
He passed away, and never came again.
He left his home, his friends, his titles, all,
To stand, or live, or perish in their pride,
And, seeking out some unknown country,—died.
He died, and left no vain memorial
Of him or of his deeds, for scorn or praise;
No record for the proud Colonna race
To blot or blazon, cherish or compare,
His fate is lost: his name (like others)—air.

XVIII.

My tale hath reached its end: yet still there dwells
A superstition in those piny dells,
Near to Laverna. Forms 'tis said, are seen
Beside the cave where once Colonna lay,
And shadows linger there at close of day,
And dusky shapes amongst the forests green
Pass off like vapours at the break of morn;
And sometimes a faint figure, (with a star
Crowning her forehead,) has been seen afar,
To haunt the cliff and hang her head forlorn:
And peasants still at the approach of night,
Even at distance, shun that starry light,
And dread 'The Lady of the Mountains' when
She rises radiant from her haunted glen.
The convent? still it stands: its pile is strong,
And well it echoes back the tempest's song;
And still the cave is there; but they, alone
Who made it famous,—they are passed and gone.

THE END.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE.

Many of the facts stated or referred to in this Sketch, may be found in Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. On the night before the Emperor Julian fought his last battle, he had the dream which I have detailed in the first Scene of this Sketch; and it is recorded that on the night of his death he addressed his soldiers, distributed rewards amongst them, and conversed with the sophists around him, respecting the immortality of the Soul. The names of Anatolius, Nevitta, &c. are taken from history.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE.

SCENE I. *The Tent of the Emperor Julian. Night—near day-break.*

(JULIAN—*alone.*)

To-morrow ?—aye, to-morrow. The bright Sun
Of my life will set in blood. Dark, heavy clouds
Are rolling round about me, yet my eye
Can reach into the dim eternity,
And in its bosom is—my grave. Oh! then,
Valour and War, farewell! Soldiers and friends,
Who in tempest of the battle, once,
With your loves girded me like triple steel,
I must be gone. Morning and Night farewell!
And all the beauty of this visible world;
And thou, fair Air! who music art and perfume,
Colour and light, and in thy silent arms
Now nursest with cold dews the sleeping flower,

And bidd'st the fever'd heart forget its pain,
Shall I behold thee never again?—Never!
A dull, protracting, melancholy word,
That, in an alien language, talks despair.
'Never!'—then Hope is gone and time departed;
And Happiness that flies and then returns,
Making its presence precious—all are gone.
—Is there no armour of the soul wherein
I may array my thoughts and vanquish Death?
It may not be: my hour is come—is come:
And I must tread upon that shadowy strand
A shadow, a pale solitary thing,
For ages and for ages, and there be
A Spirit, filled with human thoughts and pains,
Languishing for some remote Elysium.
Great Mars, look down upon me: Am I not
Thy son adopted? oh! my patron Mars,
My father, and my god, I perish here
For want of succour. Fate and Death, at hand,
Wait smiling for the dust of Julian;
And the grave opens, with a sickly smile,
Its hollow home, inviting me to rest.

Away—this must not be. Imperial Rome
Leans on my sword.—Who goes?

[ANATOLIUS *enters.*]

Anat. My emperor!
You are——

Julian. 'Tis nothing—nothing. I am well.
Come hither, Anatolius: sit by me.
Tomorrow I—pshaw! that's for after thought.
Tomorrow we must give the Persians battle.
What say you, Sir? Is your heart firm, or have
These Syrian suns withered your spirit up?

Anat. It is the same as ever.

Julian. My good soldier.

Anat. Let us but once meet Sapor face to face:
We fly now. Oh! that we should fly from slaves,
Whom we have fought and beat day after day,
'Till we were faint with conquest——

Julian. Forget this.
'Tis true, indeed, we take less time for breathing,
Now that we march for Rome, than when we came
Intent to see the Persian on his throne:
And in our trumpets now the wailing notes

Sound lingering and prolonged. Well! 'twas not so
When we did visit Antioch—no, by Mars,
Nor when we rode thro' Anatho, or pushed
Our battering engines thro' the gates of Anbar.
Those were good times—great times.

Anat. Aye, when we shook
Down to the dust their sixteen towers of brick
At Maogamalcha, and did mine our way
Beneath the dark foundations of its walls,
The Persian did not smile: there was no time—
And yet, (before,) do you remember how
They laughed upon us from their ramparts, and
Sung out with lusty lungs triumphant songs
About the glory of Sapor, (then he hid
His head in Ctesiphon,) and—but you droop,
My noble king!—

Julian. Good Anatolius, you
Have been my friend and fellow soldier long;
From my youth upwards. We have fought together
In Germany and Gaul, and on the banks
Of the black Danube, when its waters lay
'Tween us and Hope.

Anat. Like a dark rolling Hell.
Oh! I remember it.
Julian. My spirit never
Quail'd in those times of peril, yet—
Anat. My lord?
Julian. Nor doth it now: but there is on my soul
A solemn foreboding that to-morrow's light—
—To day's—for even now the clouds begin
To break about the east, and dawn is here
Before the stars have left us: Be it so.
My fate comes onward with a hurrying step:
I'll meet it as becomes me.—My old friend,
Bear with me, and believe no idle fears
Shake me at this great hour. Thou shalt never
Blush to behold thine old companion die,
Who once fought well beside thee.
Anat. Oh! you hurt me.
By the great Jove you tear my heart away.
Why will you do it?
Julian. My dear soldier, this
Is the last day of Julian. Mourn it not.
Early I die, but in my life I have

Seen many things that age but seldom looks on.
Pleasure and power and peril. I have made
Myself a name, and carried the Roman arms
Nobly amongst the nations. I shall be
Known to far ages as a man who bowed
Before his ancient Gods, and left a path
In which he *thought* he erred, for one more bright.
Nor, when posterity shall speak of me,
Will it forget to say that I—(I hope not)
Was Anatolius' friend.

Anat. I cannot stay.
I shall be angry with you—Oh! is it thus
You tune my ear for battle. I shall not fight
As I was wont: I know it. Farewell now;
We'll talk of this to-morrow.

Julian. Oh! to-day
I must say something, Anatolius;
And you must listen, for 'twill ease my soul.
Fear not for me to-day. You'll see my sword
As busy as ever at its bloody work,
And, in the van, my plume. I have a leaf
From the green crown of Victory. You shall see
How soon we'll tame the Persian spirits down.

Anat. Aye, now you speak like Julian. Oh! we'll beat
These brown barbarians to their silken tents,
As we were wont. Let's talk of better times,
(If we must talk)—of the old Roman times,
When our rich veins fed Conquest with their blood,
And fear was stifled in our hearts. Away—
We'll fight as bravely as great Julius did,
And feast to-day with Sapor.

Julian. You shall do it.
And now but listen to me.—I have had
A solemn dream. Methought there did appear
The Genius of my country by my couch:
He held the horn of plenty in his hand,
And, covering it with a veil funereal,
Shrouded his head in darkness: Slowly then
Without a word—one word, he floated out,
And left me in my tent, alone.

Anat. Go on,
Go on.

Julian. I 'woke and started from my bed,
But there was nothing,—nought: So, I went forth,

(Then wide awake) to look upon the sky ;
For I have studied deeply the high art
Of Divination, and can read the stars—

Anat. You jest?

Julian. No; by my father's spirit. Until now
You never heard me tell of this: but, once—
'Tis long ago—at Athens—(ere I dreamt
Of Rome or of the purple,) I was wont
To commune with her gray philosophers;
And they did bare the secrets of the grave,
And shew'd unto mine eyes Cadmean scrolls,
Torn from the tombs of Egypt. I became
An Eleusinian, and partook those rites
Mysterious and sublime, which no man knows
Save only the elect. I have listened to
The famous oracles; and, once a day,
Have heard at Thebes the lonely marble voice
Speak out unto Apollo. I have learned
Magic, and things which since the birth of time,
Have all been hidden from inferior minds,
Which better thrive in darkness than in light.

Anat. And now—

Julian. And now, I can divine my fate.
Last night I saw my tutelary star
('Tis Mars) rolling in the blue firmament,
Usurping all one quarter of the sky;
At last he seemed to shake, and left his orb,
Streaming athwart the heavens. Methought he went
To meet the morn and died. By Serapis!
I saw him vanish in the east.

Anat. Away;
And what of this? 'tis nothing.

Julian. I am now
Deserted by my planetary God.
Ah!—the sun comes: then I must haste to speak.
—You must remember when Constantius died:
He left a widow.

Anat. And a child.

Julian. 'Twas so.
Eusebia was—ev'n while Constantius' wife,
Gracious to me. In boyhood, when I was
Once in great danger, she did plead my cause,
(You know how eloquent she was,) and saved me:
And ever after, thro' my checquer'd life,

She stood my friend. Beneath her warming smile
My fortunes flourished, and I grew to power,
Who else perhaps had lived not.

Anat. That was noble.

I did not know what cause you had to love her.

Julian. She loved me; more perhaps than might become
The emperor's wife; (for when I wedded Helena
She was estranged awhile, and saw me not;)
But my wife died, and then Constantius fell,
Hated by all. Somewhat indeed of hate
(Unjustly) clings upon his widow still.
When I have perished, Anatolius, thou
Wilt be Eusebia's friend?

Anat. I will, I will.

But you will live.

Julian. But should I die, my soldier,
(I must) do thou be poor Eusebia's friend.
Bid her retire to Athens. She will there
Be safe, and (for I know her,) glad to shun
The imperial splendor. Well! what say you, friend?

Julian to Anatolius speaks his last.

Anat. I swear by all—by these hot shameful tears:
But—but I too may fall.

Julian. Look on this pacquet.
Bear it about thee, and lest any harm
(The Gods keep harm from thee) hinder thee from
Befriending the poor queen, tell to Nevitta,
Before the battle, this his general's wish.
He will do all, I think, (but not as thou,)
Eusebia's gloomier fortunes ask. Tell him
To look upon my arm when I am dead,
And he'll see there a scar I got in Gaul.
It saved his life once: bid him think on that,
And be my friend for ever.

SCENE II. *Julian's Tent.—Evening.*

JULIAN (*on his couch, wounded;*) PRISCUS, MAXIMUS.

Max. You 're easier now?

Julian. Much easier: many thanks.
—And so you think, good Priscus, that the Soul
Doth of necessity quit this feeble clay,
When the poor breath departs—that 'tis not hung
On muscle or nerve, or buried in the blood,
As some will teach. For my part, I believe
That there is good and evil, and for each
Due punishment and reward. Shall we not meet
Our friends hereafter, think you, Maximus?

Max. I hope so, my dear Lord.

Julian. What think you, Sir?

Priscus. I must believe it. There is in the world
Nothing to fill up the wide heart of man;
He languishes for something past the grave;
He hopes—and Hope was never vainly given.

Max. Hope treads but shadowy ground, at best

Priscus. It is——

Max. A guess.

Julian. And yet, Priscus is right, I think:
And Hope has in the soul obscure allies—
Remorse, for evil acts; the dread of death;
Anticipative joy, (tho' that, indeed,
Is Hope, more certain;) and as, Priscus says,
That inward languishment of mind, which dreams
Of some remote and high accomplishment,
And pictures to our fancies perfect sights,
Sounds and delights celestial;—and, above all,
That feeling of a limitary power,
Which strikes and circumscribes the soul, and speaks
Dimly, but with a voice potential, of
Wonders beyond the world, etherial,
Starry, and pure, and sweet, and never ending.
I cannot think that the great Mind of man,
With its accumulated wisdoms too,
Must perish; why, the words he utters live:
And is the Spirit which gives birth to things
Below its own creations?——Who is there?

[*An Officer enters.*]

Off. My Lord, the commander Nevitta asks
An audience.

Julian. Bid him come. I have not seen
Our friend (how is it?) Anatolius here.

[NEVITTA *enters.*]

Your hand, my good Nevitta: Well! you see
We beat the Persian bravely to his camp;
You'll tell 'em yet, at home, how well they ride
In Syria, when we spur their horses on.
Indeed—but where is Anatolius?—Gods!
Come near Nevitta.

Nevit. He hath given to me—

Julian. Then he is dead. Great Minos! judge him kindly.
He was the bravest soldier.

Nevit. He is gone
Before us, my dear Lord. He had a task,
Which I have sworn to do.

Julian. Friend! many thanks.
I'll look for thee hereafter, as for one
Who did me noble service. Maximus,
We've lost——

Max. Who?

Julian. Anatolius—an old friend:
Our fellow soldier; nay, he was to me,
A tutor in the art of war. In youth,
I fought beneath him; after as his fellow;
And last his king. He had great courage, Sirs;
I saw him strike a bounding lion once,
When taller men fled trembling. He fought well
At Anatho, and Anbar, and in Gaul,
And Germany, and Maogamalcha, when
We washed ourselves in blood. Old Sapor now
May sun him boldly on his parched plains.
Yet, pardon, good Nevitta: thou art brave,
As warrior may be—oh! and many others.
Let it be Anatolius' perfect praise
To say he well became his titles,—well;
And died like a Roman soldier.

Nevit. I rejoice
To see you better, noble Lord.

Julian. I am.
The pains are gone, Nevitta, and I pass
Pleasantly on: the road leads to the skies,

And mine's a summer's journey.—Who are they
That wait without? methought I heard a sound
Like murmurs: I would fain depart at least
With my friends smiles around. Oh! let me have
No wailing voices to disturb my sleep;
No ghosts of injured men to come and shriek
Perdition in my ears, and bar me from
Golden eternity.

Nevit. Your soldiers ask
To see once more their Emperor.

Max. They cannot.

Julian. Bid them come in—I thank you Maximus
For your kind care, but it will soothe my heart
To look upon my soldiers once again.
There's little time to spare, and I would fain
Say a few words at parting.

[NEVITTA *calls the Soldiers in.*]

Max. They are here.

Julian. Welcome my friends. Ah! raise me higher:
thanks.
Give me a moment for recovery. (*a pause.*)

—*Friends,
And fellow soldiers, the good season of
My death is now at hand, and I discharge
(As doth a ready debtor) every claim
Great nature makes; for I have long been taught
By lessons of divine philosophy
How much the soul is better than the clay
That holds it, and that man should more rejoice
Than grieve, when separates the nobler part;
And from religion I have learned that death
Early is proof the Gods do love us well.
I have sought ever your happiness: firm peace
Was my first aim, but when my country's voice
Did summon me to arms, I bared my heart
To war and all its dangers, knowing (for
I could divine my fate) that I must die
In battle.—Now unto great Jove I offer
My thanks for that he hath saved me from disease,
False friends and the darts of foul conspirators.
He gave me a career of glory, and now

* These are nearly the words of Julian.

An honourable end: thus much I've tried
To say; but my strength fails me, and I feel
Death is at hand. Chuse for yourselves, my friends,
Another emperor now: the one who sheds
His blessing on ye, is about to pass
Unto the stars.

Sold. Alas, Alas!

Julian. Weep not.
Oh! my good Soldiers, weep not. You have been
All that your king has ever wished—till now.
Oh! you unman me: let us say farewell
Before we stain our cheeks with too much tears.
Yet—I've a few bequests. I love ye all
Alike; but there are some (a few) to whom
The chances of the war have made me debtor.
Marcus!

Sold. My Lord.

Julian. Come hither, my good Marcus.
—Now, by the God of battle, I shall weep,
And shame my death at once, if thus you play
The girl before me. Will you then betray
Your emperor, now so many eyes look on?

Sold. Oh! my dear Master.

Julian. Marcus, you have laid
A weight of gratitude upon my soul,
Which it can ne'er shake off: yet be content
Old Marcus, that I now, in this great hour,
Proclaim thee my good servant.—Look! this chain
Hath hung about me like an amulet,
For many seasons. Wear it near thy heart,
As the last gift of Julian. So, farewell.
Fabricius you have done your part to-day,
(And thro' the Persian war,) like a true soldier.
Live henceforth a centurion. Here is gold
For thee, and never in the after times
Forget to interpose thy shield between
A hot barbarian and thy living King:
So hast thou done to-day. Before ye all
I speak this of Fabricius: love him for it.
Farewell, centurion. Now, come hither, youth.
What is your name?

Sold. 'Tis—Julian, my great Lord.

Julian. So then; my namesake. I am proud of you.
Soldiers and friends, be sure, when I am gone,

You shelter this young blossom of the war,
Altho' he looks like Hylas, he can lift
A spear like Mars. To-day I saw him strike
A Persian to the ground, of twice his years;
A giant fellow, who perhaps had else
Trampled me down (for I was bleeding fast,)
And sav'd me so much talking—Ah!—

Priscus. You're pale.
Come, bid the men farewell. Nay—

Julian. I believe
It must indeed be so. Farewell, my Friends,
(All friends and noble soldiers,) fare ye well.
May the Gods smile on ye, and victory
Sit on your swords for ever. So, farewell.

[SOLDIERS *go out.*]

Priscus and Maximus, is it not strange
That I who but last evening (nay, by Mars,
This very morn) was checked for my sad talk,
By Anatolius, in a few short hours
Should, in my turn, stifle the words of grief
In others?

Max. So it is. The mind is full

Of curious changes that perplex itself.
Just like the visible world ; and the heart ebbs
Like the great sea ; first flows, and then retires,
And on the passions doth the spirit ride,
Thro' sunshine and in rain, from good to ill,
Then to deep vice, and so on back to virtue ;
Till in the grave, that universal calm,
We sleep the sleep eternal.

Julian. You have not
The wish to live hereafter, Maximus ;
Or you would feel how poor to the Soul's eye
Are there our earthly joys. If Death were sleep,
Why should we dread to sleep, who often court
A noon-day's slumber, and who bless the power
That gently on our eyelids lays his touch,
In times of fever, tumult, grief, or pain ?
Oh ! is it thus that ye would bid me think,
Now I am going from ye ?—Mighty Jove !
I do beseech thee, and thou, valiant Mars,
My guardian God, look from your burning thrones
Upon the fainting soul of Julian.
Have I not lov'd and worshipped ye, and turned

From other altars to bow down to yours,
And will ye now desert me? I do ask
Now as I die, a word (I ask but one
For all that I have done) to tell the world
My faith was good. I ask ye—shall the grave
Clip up for ever in its chilling arms—
And are the stories of hereafter, fables?
Are there not pleasures and consuming pains,
Endless or limited, for good and ill—
And dreams—enchantments for the eye and ear
Of all who earn the rare Elysium?
And haunted Styx, where disembodied shapes
Wander; and Tartarus, that profounder gloom,
Filled up with wretches who were their own slaves,—
And Fate, and dark Alecto and her train,
And Death, and Rhadamanthus, mighty judge,
And the most drear dominion of the dead—
O speak! a word, a glance, a gleam, to shew me
The world to come.—They sleep, or answer not.
And yet will they move from their mighty rest,
To hearken to my frail petitioning?
I cannot hope it. Priscus, Maximus—

Farewell; I faint: My tongue is withered up.
It clings against my mouth. Some air—air. Ah!
This is death, Priscus. Oh! How like a child
A Soldier sinks before him. Jove!—— (*dies.*)

Max. He faints.

Priscus. He does indeed, for ever: his last breath
Is mingled with the winds.

AMELIA WENTWORTH.

AMELIA WENTWORTH.

SCENE I. *A Room.*

WENTWORTH, AMELIA.

Amel. You have determined then on sending Charles
To India?

Went. Yes.

Amel. Poor boy! he looks so sad and pale,
He'll never live there. 'Tis a cruel lot
At best, to leave the land that gave us birth,
And sheltered us for many a pleasant year;
The friends that loved us and the spots we loved,
For such a distant country. He will die.
Remember,—'tis Amelia's prophecy.
Oh! do not be so harsh to the poor youth.
Do not desert your better nature. Nay—
You will not send him, Wentworth?

Went. He will sail
In twenty days.

Amel. How can you be so cruel.
He shall not go.

Went. Madam, you interest
Yourself too much, methinks, for this young man.
His doom is settled ; that be sure of.

Amel. Sir !

Went. I say your tenderness, your—folly for
This boy becomes you not.

Amel. Away, away.

Went. Madam, while you are Godfrey Wentworth's wife,
These tender—friendships must be laid aside.
Oh ! you can smile. By——

Amel. Mr. Wentworth, you
(I must believe it) jest : you jest with me.

Went. Go on, go on : you think me quite a fool.
Woman, my eyes are open ; wide awake,
To you, and all my infamy. By heaven,
I will not be a bye word and a mock
In all the mouths of men, for any——Pshaw !
I still respect your ears, you see ; I——

Amel. You
Insult me, Sir.

Went. Forgive me: I indeed
Am somewhat of a prude; you'll scorn me for it.
I still think women modest—in the mass.

Amel. Sir—Mr. Wentworth—you have used me ill.
Yourself you have used ill. You have forgot
All—what is due to me—What to your wife.
You have forgot—forgot—can *I* forget
All that I sacrificed for you?—my youth,
My home, my heart—(You know—you knew it then)
In sad obedience to my father's word?
You promised to that father (how you kept
That promise, now remember) you would save
His age from poverty: he had been bred
In splendour, and he could not bow him down,
Like men who never felt the warmth of fortune.
He gave me up, a victim; and I saw
Myself (ah! how I shuddered) borne away
By you, the Evil Angel of my life,
To a portentous splendour. I became
A pining bride, a wretch,—a slave to all
Your host of passions; but I swore (may God
Forgive me!) to love you—you, when I loved

Another, and you knew it: Yes, you knew
My heart was given away, and yet you wed me.
Leave me! Sir.

Went. Have you done? Woman, do you think
This mummery is to work me from my purpose—
My settled will. Mistress, I leave you now:
But this remember, that your minion—Oh!
I do not heed your frowning—your boy-love
Will visit India shortly or, it may be
(You are his guide) a prison here, in England.
Farewell.

Amel. Yet stay—a word more ere we quit.
I do beseech you (tho' my wrongs are great,
And my proud spirit ill can stoop to this,)
You take your malediction from this youth.
He is as innocent—I *think* he's innocent
Of the least ill toward you. For me, I am
Too innocent to sue; yet let me say,
Since the sad hour I wed you, I have been
As faithful to our cold communion,
As tho' my heart had from the first been yours,
Or you been generous after. Once more, Sir,

I would implore you—for your comfort—for
Your honour, and my name, to spare this boy.
In the calm tone of one who has not erred
I do require this of you.

Went. You but steel
My heart against him. Woman, is your pleading
Always as warm as now? By earth and heaven,
Had I but wavered in his destiny,
This would have fixed me. Seek your chamber now,
And in your meditations think how well
Your name may sound (my name!) held up to scorn.
It may be worth your care. Thus long I've hid
My wrath, and let you wander at your will.
You have grown bold in guilt; be prudent now:
Save a fair name, or I must tell the world
How ill you keep your secrets. [*Exit* WENT.

Amel. He is gone.
And I am here—oh! such a weary wretch.
Oh! Father, Father, what a heart had you
To cast me on the wide and bitter world,
With such a friend as this. I would have toiled
From the pale morning 'till the dusk of night.

And lived as poorly, and smiled cheerfully,
Keeping out sorrow from our cottage home.
And there was one who would have loved you too,
And aided with his all our wreck of fortune.
You would not hear him;—and,—and did *I* hear
His passionate petitioning, and see
His scalding tears, and fling myself away
Upon a wintry bosom, that held years
Doubling my own. What matters it?—'tis past.
I will be still myself: who's there?

[CHARLES *enters.*]

Ch. 'Tis I.
You are in tears?

Amel. Away. Draw down the blinds;
The summer evenings now come warmly on us.
Go, pluck me yonder flower.

Ch. This Rose—mean you?
It fills the room with perfume: 'tis as red,
And rich, and almost too, as beautiful,
As——

Amel. As Aurora's blushes, or my own.
I see you want a simile.

Ch. You are gay.
Too gay for earnest talk. Who has been here?
Amel. No one; I will not tell; I've made a vow,
And will not break it, 'till—until I'm pressed.
Ch. Then let me press you.
Amel. Silly boy, away,
Go gather me more flowers, violets.
Ch. Here let me place them in your hair.
Amel. No, no.
The violet is for poets: they are yours.
O rare! I like to see you bosom them.
Had they been golden, such as poets earned,
You might have treasured them.
Ch. They are far more
To me,—for they were yours, Amelia.
Amel. Give me the rose.
Ch. But where shall it be placed?
Amel. Why in my hand—my hair. Look! how it blushes,
To see us both so idle. Give it me.
Where? where do ladies hide their favourite flowers,
But in their bosoms, foolish youth. Away—

'Tis I must do it. Pshaw! how sad you look,
And how you tremble.

Ch. Dear Amelia.

Amel. Call me your mother, Charles.

Ch. My Guardian——

Amel. Ah! name him not to me. Charles, I have been
Jesting awhile; but my dark husband's frown
Comes like a cloud upon me. You must go
Far, my dear Charles, from the one friend who loves you:
To Hindostan.

Ch. I know it.

Amel. For myself,
I shall think of you often, my dear Charles.
Think of me sometimes. When your trumpet sounds,
You'll recollect the coward you knew once,
Over the seas in England?

Ch. Spare my heart.

Amel. I do not think you have a heart: 'tis buried.

Ch. Amelia, Oh! Amelia, will you never
Know the poor heart that breaks and bursts for you?

Oh! do not take it ill; but now believe
How fond, and true, and faithful——
Amel. Is this jest?
You act well, Sir; or—but if it be true,
Then what am I?
Ch. Oh! by these burning tears;
By all my haunted days and wakeful nights,
Oh! by yourself I swear, dearest of all,
I love—love you, my own Amelia!
Once I *will* call you so. Do—do not scorn me,
And blight my youth—I do not ask for love;
I dare not. Trample not upon my heart,
My untouched heart—I gave it all to you,
Without a spot of care or sorrow on it.
My spirit became yours—I worshipped you,
And for your sake in silence. Say but once
You hate me not, for this—Speak, speak!
Amel. Alas!
Ch. Weep not for me, my gentle love. You said
Your husband threatened you. Come, then, to me;
I have a shelter and a heart for you,
Where, ever and for ever you shall reign.

Amelia, dear Amelia! speak a word
Of kindness and consenting to me—Speak!
If but a word, or tho' it be not kindness:
Speak hope, doubt, fear,—but not despair; Or say
That some day you *may* love, or that if ever
Your cruel husband dies, you'll think of me;
Or that you wish me happy,—or that perhaps
Your heart—nay speak to me, Amelia.

Amel. Is then your love so deep?

Ch. So deep? It is
Twined with my life: it *is* my life—my food—
The natural element wherein I breathe—
My madness—my heart's madness—it is all
—Oh! what a picture have I raised upon
My sandy wishes. I have thought at times
That you and I in some far distant country
Might live together, blessing and beloved;
And I have shaped such plans of happiness,
For us and all around us, (you indeed
Ever the sweet superior spirit there,)
That were you always—Fair Amelia,
You listen with a melancholy smile?

Amel. Let me hear all: 'tis fit I should hear all.
Alas, Alas!

Ch. Weep not for me, my love.
I—I am nought: not worth a single tear:
I will depart—or may I kiss away
Those drops of rain? Well, well, I will not pain you.
And yet—Oh! what a paradise is love:
Secure, requited love. I will not go:
Or we will go together. There are haunts
For young and happy spirits: You and I
Will thither fly, and dwell beside some stream
That runs in music 'neath the Indian suns,
Aye, some sweet island still shall be our home,
Where fruits and flowers are born thro' all the year,
And Summer, Autumn, Spring, are ever young,
Where Winter comes not, and where nought abides
But Nature in her beauty revelling.
You shall be happy, sweet Amelia,
At last; and I—it is too much to think of.
Forgive me while I look upon thee now,
And swear to thee by Love, and Night, and all
The gliding hours of soft and starry Night,

How much—how absolutely I am thine.
My pale and gentle beauty—what a heart
Had he to wrong thee, or ubpraid thee! He
Was guilty—nay, nay: look not so.
Amel. I have
Been guilty of a cruel act toward you.
Charles, I indeed am guilty. When to-day
My husband menaced me, and told me of
Public and broad disgrace, it met my scorn:
But have I, my poor youth, been so unkind
To you, as not to see this—love before?
Charles, I have driven you from your early home:
I see it now: I only—hate me for it.
Ch. I'll love you, like bright heaven. The fixed stars
Shall never be so constant. I am all
Your own. Not sin, nor sorrow, nor the grave,
Not the cold, hollow grave shall chill my love:
It will survive beyond the bounds of death,
The spirit of the shadow which may there
Perhaps do penance for my deeds of ill.
Amel. Stay this wild talk.

Ch. Men have been known to love
Thro' years of absence, aye, in pain and peril,
And one did cast life and a world away,
For a loose woman's smile: nay, Love has dwelt,
A sweet inhabitant, in a dæmon's breast,
Lonely, amidst bad passions; burning there,
Like a most holy and sepulchral light,
And almost hallowing its dark tenement.
Why may not I——

Amel. I thought I heard a step.
How strangely you speak now—again, again.
Leave me; quick, leave me.

Ch. 'Tis your tyrant coming:
Fly rather you.

Amel. If you have pity, go.

Ch. Farewell then: yet, should he repulse you—

Amel. Then
I will—but go: you torture me.

Ch. I am gone. [*Exit.*

Amel. Farewell, farewell, poor youth; so desolate
That even I can spare a tear for you.
—My husband comes not: I will meet him, then,

Armed in my innocence and wrongs. Alas!
'Tis hard to suffer where we ought to judge,
And pray to those who should petition us.
'Tis a brave world, I see. Power and wrong
Go hand in hand resistless and abhorred,
And patient virtue and pale modesty,
Like the sad flowers of the too early spring,
Are cropped before they blossom—or trod down,
Or by the fierce winds withered. Is it so?—
But *I* have flaunted in the Sun, and cast
My smiles in prodigality away:
And now, and now—no matter. I have done.
Whether I live scorned or beloved—Beloved!
Better be hated, could my pride abate,
And I consent to fly. It may be thus.

SCENE II. *A Chamber. Night.*

A considerable period of time is supposed to have elapsed between this and the preceding Scene.

AMELIA, MARIAN.

Mar. Are you awake, dear lady?

Amel. Wide awake.

There are the stars abroad, I see.—I feel
As tho' I had been sleeping many a day.
What time o' the night is it?

Mar. About the stroke
Of midnight.

Amel. Let it come. The skies are calm
And bright; and so, at last, my spirit is.
Whether the Heavens have influence on the mind
Thro' life, or only in our days of death,
I know not; yet, before, ne'er did my soul
Look upwards with such hope of joy, or pine
For that hope's deep completion. Marian!
Let me see more of Heaven. There—enough.
Are you not well, sweet girl?

Mar. Oh! yes: but you
Speak now so strangely: you were wont to talk

Of plain familiar things, and cheer me: now
You set my spirit drooping.
Amel. I have spoke
Nothing but cheerful words, thou idle girl.
Look, look! above: the canopy of the sky,
Spotted with stars, shines like a bridal dress:
A queen might envy that so regal blue
Which wraps the world o' nights. Alas, alas!
I do remember in my follying days
What wild and wanton wishes once were mine,
Slaves—radiant gems—and beauty with no peer,
And friends (a ready host)—but I forget.
I shall be dreaming soon, as once I dreamt,
When I had Hope to light me. Have you no song,
My gentle girl, for a sick woman's ear?
There's one I've heard you sing. 'They said his eye'—
No, that's not it: the words are hard to hit.
'His eye like the mid-day sun was bright—'
Mar. 'Tis so.
You've a good memory. Well, listen to me.
I must not trip, I see.
Amel. I hearken. Now.

SONG.

His eye like the mid-day sun was bright,
Hers had a proud but milder light,
Clear and sweet like the cloudless moon:
Alas! and must it fade as soon?

His voice was like the breath of war,
But hers was fainter—softer far;
And yet, when he of his long love sighed,
She laughed in scorn:—he fled, and died.

Mar. There is another verse, of a different air,
But indistinct—like the low moaning
Of summer winds in the evening: Thus it runs:

They said he died upon the wave,
And his bed was the wild and bounding billow:
Her bed shall be a dry earth grave:
Prepare it quick, for she wants her pillow.

Amel. How slowly and how silently doth Time
Float on his starry journey. Still he goes,
And goes, and goes, and doth not pass away.
He rises with the golden morning, calmly,
And with the moon at night. Methinks, I see
Him stretching wide abroad his mighty wings,
Floating for ever o'er the crowds of men,
Like a huge vulture with its prey beneath.
Lo! I am here, and Time seems passing on:
To-morrow I shall be a breathless thing—
Yet he will still be here; and the blue Hours
Will laugh as gaily on the busy world,
As tho' I were alive to welcome them.
There's one will shed some tears. Poor Charles!

[CHARLES *enters.*]

Ch. I am here.
Did you not call?

Amel. You come in time. My thoughts
Were full of you, dear Charles. Your mother (now
I take that title,) in her dying hour
Has privilege to speak unto your youth.
There's one thing pains me; and I would be calm.

—My husband has been harsh unto me,—yet
He *is* my husband; and you'll think of this
If any sterner feeling move your heart?
Seek no revenge for me. You will not?—Nay,
Is it so hard to grant my last request?
He is my husband: he was father, too,
Of the blue-eyed boy you were so fond of once.
Do you remember how his eyelids closed
When the first summer rose was opening?
'Tis now two years ago—more, more; and I—
I now am hastening to him. Pretty boy!
He was my only child. How fair he looked
In the white garment that encircled him—
'Twas like a marble slumber; and when we
Laid him beneath the green earth in his bed,
I thought my heart was breaking—yet I lived:
But I am weary now.

Mar. You must not talk,
Indeed, dear lady; nay—

Ch. Indeed you must not.

Amel. Well then, I will be silent: yet, not so.
For ere we journey ever should we take

A sweet leave of our friends, and wish them well,
And tell them to take heed, and bear in mind
Our blessings. So, in your breast, dear Charles,
Wear the remembrance of Amelia.
She ever loved you,—ever; so as might
Become a mother's tender love,—no more.
Charles, I have lived in this too bitter world
Now almost thirty seasons: you have been
A child to me for one third of that time.
I took you to my bosom, when a boy,
Who scarce had seen eight Springs come forth and vanish.
You have a warm heart, Charles, and the base crowd
Will feed upon it, if—but you must make
That heart a grave, and in it bury deep
Its young and beautiful feelings.

Ch. I will do
All that you wish—all; but you cannot die
And leave me.

Amel. You shall see how calmly Death
Will come and press his finger, cold and pale,
On my now smiling lip: These eyes men swore

Were brighter than the stars that fill the sky,
And yet they must grow dim: an hour—

Ch. Oh! no.

No, no: oh! say not so. I cannot bear
To hear you talk thus. Will you break my heart?

Amel. No: I would caution it against a change,
That soon must happen. Calmly let us talk.
When I am dead—

Ch. Alas, Alas!

Amel. This is
Not as I wish: you had a braver spirit.
Bid it come forth. Why, I have heard you talk
Of war and danger—Ah!—

[WENTWORTH *enters.*]

Mar. She's pale—speak, speak.

Ch. Oh! my lost mother.—How!—You here?

Went. I am come,
To pray her pardon. Let me touch her hand.
Amelia! she faints: Amelia! [*She dies.*
Poor faded girl! I was too harsh—unjust.

Ch. Look!

Mar. She has left us.

Ch. It is false. Revive!
Mother, revive, revive!
Mar. It is in vain.
Ch. Is it then so?—My soul is sick and faint.
Oh! mother, mother. I—I cannot weep.
Oh! for some blinding tears to dim my eyes,
So I might not gaze on her.—And has Death
Indeed, indeed struck *her*,—so beautiful?
So wronged, and never erring; so beloved
By one—who now has nothing left to love.
Oh! thou bright Heaven, if thou art calling now
Thy brighter angels to thy bosom,—rest,
For lo! the brightest of thy host is gone—
Departed,—and the earth is dark below.
—And now—I'll wander far and far away,
Like one that hath no country. I shall find
A sullen pleasure in that life, and when
I say 'I have no friend in all the world,'
My heart will swell with pride, and make a show
Unto itself of happiness; and in truth
There is, in that same solitude, a taste
Of pleasure which the social never know.

—From land to land I'll roam, in all a stranger,
And, as the body gains a braver look
By staring in the face of all the winds,
So from the sad aspects of different things
My soul shall pluck a courage, and bear up
Against the past.—And now—for Hindostan.

THE RAPE OF PROSERPINE

This Scene is written in imitation of, rather than in strict conformity to, the mode originated by the Greek Tragic-writers.

THE RAPE OF PROSERPINE

SCENE. *The Vale of Enna.*

PROSERPINE, VIRGINS.

Proser. Now come and sit around me,
And I'll divide the flowers, and give to each
What most becomes her beauty. What a vale
Is this of Enna! Every thing that comes
From the green earth, springs here more graciously;
And the blue day, methinks, smiles lovelier now
Than it was wont, even in Sicily.
My spirit mounts as triumphing, and my heart
In which the red blood hides, seems tumulted
By some delicious passion. Look, above,
Above—How nobly through the cloudless sky
The great Apollo goes!—Jove's radiant son—
My father's son: and here, below, the bosom
Of the green earth is almost hid by flowers.

Who would be sad to-day! Come round, and cast
Each one her odorous heap from out her lap,
Into one pile. Some we'll divide amongst us,
And, for the rest, we'll fling them to the Hours;
So may Aurora's path become more fair,
And we be blest in giving.
Here—this rose
(This one half blown) shall be my Maia's portion,
For that like it her blush is beautiful:
And this deep violet, almost as blue
As Pallas' eye, or thine, Lycimnia,
I'll give to thee; for like thyself it wears
Its sweetness, never obtruding. For this lily,
Where can it hang but at Cyane's breast?
And yet 'twill wither on so white a bed,
If flowers have sense for envy:—It shall lie
Amongst thy raven tresses, Cytheris,
Like one star on the bosom of the night.
The cowslip, and the yellow primrose,—they
Are gone, my sad Leontia, to their graves;
And April hath wept o'er them, and the voice
Of March hath sung, even before their deaths,

The dirge of those young children of the year.
But here is heart's-ease for your woes. And now,
The honeysuckle flower I give to thee,
And love it for my sake, my own Cyane:
It hangs upon the stem it loves, as thou
Hast clung to me, thro' every joy and sorrow;
It flourishes with its guardian's growth, as thou dost;
And if the woodman's axe should droop the tree,
The woodbine too must perish.—Hark! what sound—
Do ye see aught?

CHORUS.

Behold, behold, Proserpina!
Dark clouds from out the earth arise,
And wing their way towards the skies,
As they would veil the burning blush of day.
And, look! upon a rolling car,
Some fearful being from afar
Comes onward. As he moves along the ground,
A dull and subterranean sound
Companions him; and from his face doth shine,

Proclaiming him divine,
A light that darkens all the vale around.

SEMICHORUS, (*Cyane.*)

'Tis he, 'tis he: he comes to us
From the depths of Tartarus.
For what of evil doth he roam
From his red and gloomy home,
In the centre of the world,
Where the sinful dead are hurled?
Mark him as he moves along
Drawn by horses black and strong,
Such as may belong to Night
'Ere she takes her morning flight.
Now the chariot stops: the god
On our grassy world hath trod:
Like a Titan steppeth he,
Yet full of his divinity.
On his mighty shoulders lie
Raven locks, and in his eye
A cruel beauty, such as none
Of us may wisely look upon.

Proser. He comes indeed. How like a god he looks!

Terribly lovely—Shall I shun his eye
Which even here looks brightly beautiful?
What a wild leopard glance he has.—I am
Jove's daughter, and shall I then deign to fly?
I will not: yet, methinks, I fear to stay.
Come, let us go, Cyane.

[PLUTO *enters.*]

Pluto. Stay, oh! stay.
Proserpina, Proserpina, I come
From my Tartarean kingdom to behold you.
The brother of Jove am I. I come to say
Gently, beside this blue Sicilian stream,
How much I love you, fair Proserpina.
Think me not rude that thus at once I tell
My passion. I disarm me of all power;
And in the accents of a man I sue,
Bowing before your beauty. Brightest maid!
Let me—still unpresuming—say I have
Roamed through the earth, where many an eye hath smiled

In love upon me, tho' it knew me not;
But I have passed free from amongst them all,
To gaze on you alone. I might have clasped
Lovely and royal maids, and throned queens,
Sea nymphs, and airy shapes, that glide along
Like light across the hills, or those that make
Mysterious music in the desert woods,
Or lend a voice to fountains, or to caves,
Or answering hush the river's sweet reproach—
Oh! I've escaped from all, to come and tell
How much I love you, sweet Proserpina.

SEMICHORUS, (*Cyane.*)

Come with me, away, away,
Fair and young Proserpina.
You will die unless you flee,
Child of crowned Cybele.
Think of all your Mother's love,
Of every stream and pleasant grove
That you must for ever leave,
If the dark king you believe.

Think not of his eyes of fire,
Nor his wily heart's desire,
Nor the locks that round his head
Run like wreathed snakes, and fling
A shadow o'er his eyes glancing;
Nor, the dangerous whispers hung,
Like honey, roofing o'er his tongue.
But think of all thy Mother's glory—
Of her love—of every story
Of the cruel Pluto told,
And which grey Tradition old,
With all its weight of grief and crime,
Hath plucked from out the grave of Time.
Once again I bid thee flee,
Daughter of great Cybele.

Proser. You are too harsh, Cyane.

Pluto. Oh! my love,
Fairer than the white Naiad—Fairer far
Than aught on earth, and fair as aught in heaven:
Hear me, Proserpina!

Proser. Away, Away.

I'll not believe you. What a cunning tongue
He has, Cyane; has he not?—Away.
Can the gods flatter?

Pluto. By my burning throne!
I love you, sweetest: I will make you queen
Of my great kingdom. One third of the world
Shall you reign over, my Proserpina;
And you shall rank as high as any she,
Save one, within the starry court of Jove.

Proser. Will you be true?

Pluto. I swear it. By myself!—
Come then, my bride.

Proser. Speak thou again, my friend.
Speak, harsh Cyane, in a harsher voice,
And bid me not believe him. Ah! you droop
Your head in silence.

Pluto. Come, my brightest queen!
Come, beautiful Proserpina, and see
The regions over which your husband reigns;
His palaces, and radiant treasures, which
Mock and outstrip all fable; his great power,
Which the living own, and wandering ghosts obey,

And all the elements.—Oh! you shall sit
On my illuminated throne, and be
A queen indeed; and round your forehead shall run
Circlets of gems, as bright as those which bind
The brows of Juno on Heav'n's festal nights,
When all the gods assemble, and bend down
In homage before Jove.

Proser. Speak out, Cyane!

Pluto. But, above all, in my heart shall you reign
Supreme, a goddess and a Queen indeed,
Without a rival. Oh! and you shall share
My subterranean power, and sport upon
The fields Elysian, where, 'midst softest sounds,
And odours springing from immortal flowers,
And mazy rivers, and eternal groves
Of bloom and beauty, the good spirits walk:
And you shall take your station in the skies
Nearest the queen of Heaven, and with her hold
Celestial talk, and meet Jove's tender smile,
So beautiful——

Proser. Away, Away, Away.
Nothing but force shall ever. Oh! away.

I'll not believe—Fool that I am to smile.
Come round me virgins. Am I then betrayed?
O fraudful king!

Pluto. No, by this kiss, and this:
I am your own, my love; and you are mine
For ever and for ever.—Weep Cyane.

CHORUS.

They are gone, afar—afar:
Like the shooting of a star,
See,—their chariot fades away.
Farewell, lost Proserpina.

(*Cyane is gradually transformed.*)

But, ah! what frightful change is here?
Cyane, raise your eyes, and hear!
We call thee,—vainly; On the ground
She sinks, without a single sound,
And all her garments float around.
Again, again, she rises,—light;

Her head is like a fountain bright,
And her glossy ringlets fall,
With a murmur musical,
O'er her shoulders, like a river
That rushes and escapes for ever.
—Is the fair Cyane gone?
And is this fountain left alone
For a sad remembrance, where
We may in after times repair,
With heavy heart, and weeping eye,
To sing songs to her memory?

Oh! then farewell: and now with hearts that mourn
Deeply, to Diana's temple will we go:
But ever on this day we will return,
Constant, to mark Cyane's fountain flow:
And haply,—for among us who can know
The secrets written on the scrolls of Fate,
A day may come, when we may cease our woe;
And she, redeemed at last from Pluto's hate,
Rise in her beauty old, pure, and regenerate.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

HEREAFTER

"The glory and the freshness of a Dream."
WORDSWORTH.

I SAW a Shape of beauty in a dream,
Gazing on me. I saw her bright eyes gleam,
Like planets when the waned Moon is gone
Out of the skies. We two were quite alone:
But 'tween us there was drawn an icy bar,
That shone and sparkled like a streaming star,
And daunted me, for all the air around
Was like the coldest springs. There was no sound
Or motion from the sight that met my eye;
Yet I sate mute, and listen'd painfully
To catch the faintest whisper from the form.
Oh! I could have endured the wildest storm
Better than the bright silence of those eyes.
They froze my soul. At last, she seem'd to rise,
And, opening her white bosom, bade me come
Unto her heart, and dwell in that calm home

For ever. How I flew! the bar was shatter'd
To fragments in a moment, and I scatter'd
The bonds that bound me, as the Hebrew tore
The puny cords which in his sleep he wore.
—I flew on, gasping, through the chilling air,
Which like a winter evening glimmer'd there—
A gray and melancholy light, that seems
Born only for those dim, mysterious dreams
That haunt the speculator's brain, and grows
At last to darkness, and begets repose.

I stood beside her, (there was mighty space
Between us, though I seem'd to touch the place
Whereon she was,) and she put forth her hand
And with a look of most supreme command,
But mild as morning, took me to her heart.
—I fainted, died—I know not what;—the smart
Of Death methought was on me; but she smiled,
Like a fond mother o'er her fainting child,
And I arose. I heard that beauty call
Upon me, with a voice so musical,
So deep, and calm, and touching, that had I

Been buried in the chambers of the earth,
I had awoke, and claim'd a lovelier birth.
I listen'd to the music of her sigh,
That came across me, like a summer shower
Freshening the waters, and I blest the power,
Whate'er it was, that drew me to that place,
And let me gaze upon so fair a face.

'Youth,'—as she spoke, I gloried; 'Thou shalt see
'The secrets of the dead. This golden key
'Opens the wide doors of yon pyramid,
'Where all the goodness of the past is hid.
'Wickedness sleeps: but here, beneath my reign,
'There's much of happiness, and nought of pain.
'What there is after, yet you may not know,
'Nor may I be allow'd—nor *can* I show.
'Oh! fear me not: my heart hath lost its chill
'Towards thee now, but I will love thee still.
'I am not dreadful, youth; I——stay your breath
'And listen to me!——I am called "DEATH."
'I am belied, and mock'd, and masqued in bones,
'And hated by the bad, and, with deep groans,

‘ Am worshipp’d like a dæmon, and with tears,
‘ And all the horrid host of human fears.
‘ Yet some, for me, will lose themselves in war,
‘ And some in revelry, and some in crime,
‘ And some, in youth, will court me from afar,
‘ Striking the spirit down before its time.’

‘ I love more gentle visitings, when the Good
‘ (Aged and young, in numbers—like a flood
‘ Majestically flowing in its course,)
‘ Come to my shadowy dwellings, without force.
‘ Those hide I amongst flowers that bloom for ever,
‘ Or lay them down by yonder pleasant river,
‘ That wanders to the land oblivious.
‘ Here shall you rest for ages: even by us
‘ Time passes in his round, although his power
‘ May not be felt here ’till the final hour,
‘ When this dim land shall vanish, and the sight
‘ Open again upon some world of light.’

‘ Come; thou may’st taste of purer pleasures yet,
‘ Although thine iced limbs have lost their motion;

‘ And every sorrow thou wilt here forget,
‘ (Thou hast forgot already, while I speak.)
—‘ Here lie, and round thy head the violet
‘ Shall spring, and, in the distance, the blue ocean
‘ Shall roll, and there the moon shall seem to break
‘ From out the clouds, and (for I know the sights
‘ That do delight thee,) that fair scene shall change
‘ From time to time: and then thine eye shall range
‘ And revel all amongst the ethereal lights,
‘ That star the blue skies upon moonless nights;
‘ And brightest colours shall gleam before thine eye,
‘ And flowers arise, and soft shapes pass thee by;
‘ And perfumes shall exhale o’er thee, and here
‘ Are songs to charm thy melancholy ear,
‘ As dim and distant as the “ cuckoo-bird”
‘ To whom no mate replies, or that sad tone
‘ Of love, in deep untrodden forests heard,
‘ That cometh from the nightingale alone.’

How fearful were the words the lady spoke.---
At first, her voice upon my sense had broke
So sudden that I started, but at last

It fell and fainted, and, like music past,
Hung in my ear—or some memorial song,
That will not leave us while we walk among
Old scenes,—although they whom we prized of yore
Now live or haunt those pleasant spots no more.

What further?—nothing. The fair shape was gone;
And I was on my couch, awake, alone.

THE COMET

Regnorum eversor rubuit lethale Cometes.

BEHOLD! amidst yon wilderness of stars
(Angels and bright eyed deities that guard
The inner skies, whilst the sun sleeps by night,)
Is one unlike the rest—misshapen—red,
And wandering from its course.—If Sybils now
Breathed their dark oracles, or nations bent,
As once they bent, before Apollo's shrine,
Owning a frenzied priestess' auguries,
What might not this portend—changes and acts
Of fear, and bloody massacres—perhaps
Some sudden end to this fair formed creation,—
Or half the globe made desolate. Behold!

It glares; how like an omen. If that I
Could for a time forget myself in fable,
(Indian or Heathen storied) I could fancy
This were indeed some spirit, 'scaped by chance
From torments in the central earth, and flung
Like an eruption from the thundering breast
Of Ætna, or those mighty hills that stand
Like giants on the Quito plains, to spread
Contagion through the skies. Thus Satan once
Sprang up, adventurous, from Hell's blazing porch,
And like a stream of fire winged his fierce way
Ambiguous, undismayed, thro' frightful wastes,
To where, amidst the jarring elements,
Stern Chaos sate, and everlasting Night
Held her dominion;—yet, even there, he found
The way to Eden.

A VOICE

Vox et Præterea Nihil.

Oh! what a voice is silent. It was soft
As mountain-echoes, when the winds aloft—
The gentle winds of summer meet in caves;
Or when in sheltered places the white waves
Are 'wakened into music, as the breeze
Dimples and stems the current: or as trees
Shaking their green locks in the days of June:
Or Delphic girls when to the maiden moon
They sang harmonious pray'rs: or sounds that come
(However near) like a faint distant hum
Out of the grass, from which mysterious birth
We guess the busy secrets of the earth.
—Like the low voice of Syrinx, when she ran
Into the forests from Arcadian Pan:

Or sad Œnone's, when she pined away
For Paris, or (and yet 'twas not so gay)
As Helen's whisper when she came to Troy,
Half sham'd to wander with that blooming boy:
Like air-touch'd harps in flowery casements hung;
Like unto lovers' ears the wild words sung
In garden bowers at twilight: like the sound
Of Zephyr when he takes his nightly round,
In May, to see the roses all asleep:
Or like the dim strain which along the deep
The sea-maid utters to the sailors' ear,
Telling of tempests, or of dangers near:
Like Desdemona, who (when fear was strong
Upon her soul) chaunted the willow song,
Swan-like before she perish'd: or the tone
Of flutes upon the waters heard alone:
Like words that come upon the memory
Spoken by friends departed; or the sigh
A gentle girl breathes when she tries to hide
The love her eyes betray to all the world beside.

MELANCHOLY

THERE is a mighty Spirit, known on earth
By many names, tho' one alone becomes
Its mystery, its beauty, and its power.
It is not Fear,—'tis not the passive fear
That sinks before the future, nor the dark
Despondency that hangs upon the past:
Not the soft spirit that doth bow to pain,
Nor that which dreads itself, or slowly eats
Like a dull canker till the heart decays.
But in the meditative mind it lives,
Sheltered, caressed, and yields a great return;
And in the deep silent communion
Which it holds ever with the poet's soul,
Tempers, and doth befit him to obey

High inspiration. To the storms and winds
It giveth answer in as proud a tone ;
Or on its seat, the heart of man, receives
The gentler tidings of the elements.
I—often home returning from a spot
Holy to me from many wanderings,
Of fancy, or in fact, have felt the power
Of MELANCHOLY stealing on my soul,
Mingling with pleasant images, and from
Sorrow dividing joy ; until the shape
Of each did gather to a diviner hue,
And shone unclouded by a thought of pain.
Grief may sublime itself, and pluck the sting
From out its breast, and muse until it seem
Etherial, starry, speculative, wise.
But then it is that Melancholy comes,
Out charming grief—(as the gray morning stills
The tempest oft,) and from its fretful fire
Draws a pale light, by which we see ourselves,
The present, and the future, and the past.

MIDSUMMER MADNESS

Now would I that I might cast me in the sea
And perish not.—Great Neptune! I would be
Advanced to the freedom of the main,
And stand before your vast creation's plain,
And roam your watery kingdom thro' and thro',
And see your branching woods, and palace blue,
Spar—built and domed with crystal; ay, and view
The bedded wonders of the lonely deep,
And see on coral banks the Sea-maids sleep,
Children of ancient Nereus, and behold
Their streaming dance about their father old,
Beneath the blue Ægean, where he sate
Wedded to prophecy, and full of fate:

Or rather as Arion harped, indeed,
Would I go floating on my dolphin-steed
Over the billows, and, triúmphing there,
Call the white Siren from her cave, to share
My joy, and kiss her willing forehead fair.

I would be free.—Oh! thou fine element,
That with thy thousand ears art round me bent,
To listen and reply—Immòrtal air!
Viewless and now unfelt, I would be hurled
Almost at will about your kingdom wide,
And mount aloft and mingle in my pride
With the great spirits of your purer world;
And with the music of your winds sublime
Commune, and see those shadows, for this earth
Too buoyant, and excelling shapes, which Time
Has lifted up to a diviner birth,
Amongst the stedfast stars. Away, away;
For in the fountains bright, whence streams the day,
Now will I plunge, and bathe my brain therein,
And cleanse me of all dull poetic sin.

—It may not be. No wings have I to scale
The heights which the great poets pass along:
On earth must I still chaunt an earthly song:
But I may hear, in forests seldom trod,
Love's gentle martyr, the lost nightingale,
Voice her complaint, and when the shadows fail
May see the white stag glance across the sod
Affrighted, like a dusky spectre pale.
This is enough for me, and I can see
That female, fair—*the world's* Divinity,
Brighter than Naiad who by rivers cold
Once wept away her life, as poets told,
And fair as those transcendent queens who drank
The rich nectarean juice in heaven above,
Full in the incomparable smile of Jove,
And saw his lightning eyes, and never sank
Away before him. 'Tis enough for me,
That I can bask in woman's star-like eyes,
A slave in that love-haunted paradise,
Without a wish ever to wander free.

SONG.

"Here's a health to thee, Jessy."
BURNS.

HERE'S a health to thee, Mary,
Here's a health to thee;
The drinkers are gone,
And I am alone,
To think of home and thee, Mary.

There are some who may shine o'er thee, Mary,
And many as frank and free,
And a few as fair,
But the summer air
Is not more sweet to me, Mary.

I have thought of thy last low sigh, Mary,
And thy dimm'd and gentle eye;
And I've called on thy name
When the night winds came,
And heard my heart reply, Mary.

Be thou but true to me, Mary,
And I'll be true to thee;
And at set of sun,
When my task is done,
Be sure that I'm ever with thee, Mary.

NIGHT.

Now, to thy silent presence, Night!
Is, this my young song offered: Oh! to thee,
Down-looking with thy thousand eyes of light—
To thee, and thy starry nobility,
That float, with a delicious murmuring,
(Tho' unheard here) about thy forehead blue;
And as they ride along, in order due,
Circling the round globe in their wandering,
To thee, their ancient queen, and mother, sing.

Mother of beauty! Veiled queen!
Feared, and sought, and never seen
Without a heart-imposing feeling,
Whither art thou gently stealing?

In thy smiling presence, I
Kneel in star-struck idolatry,
And turn me to thine eye (the moon)
Fretting that it must change so soon.
Toying with this idle rhyme,
I scorn that bearded villain Time,
Thine old remorseless enemy,
And build my linked verse to thee.

Not dull and cold and dark art thou:
Who that beholds thy clearer brow,
Endiadem'd with gentlest streaks
Of fleecy-silver'd cloud, adorning
Thee fair as when the young Sun wakes,
And from his cloudy bondage breaks,
And lights upon the breast of morning,
But must feel thy powers—
Mightier than the storm that lowers,
Fairer than the virgin Hours,
That smile when Titan's daughter scatters
Her rose-leaves on the valleys low,
And bids her servant breezes blow.

Not Apollo when he dies
In the wild October skies,
Red and stormy ; nor when he,
In his meridian beauty rides
Over the bosom of the waters,
And turns the blue and burning tides
To silver, is a peer for thee,
In thy full regality.

JULIA.

This Sketch originally formed part of the principal poem in this book; and may be read after the line
"She thought no longer of her cloistered Son."—p. 13.

LET me for once describe her—once—for she
(Julia) hath passed into my memory,
As 'twere some angel image, and there clings,
Like music round the harp's Æolian strings:
A word—a breath revives her, and she stands
As beautiful, and young, and free from care,
As when upon the Tyber's yellow sands
She loosened to the winds her golden hair,
In almost childhood; and in pastime run
Like young Aurora from the morning sun.
Oh! never was a form so delicate
Fashioned in dream or story, to create

Wonder or love in man. I cannot tell
Half of the charms I saw—I see; but well
Each one became her. She was very fair,
And young, I said; and her thick tresses were
Of the bright colour of the light of day:
Her eyes were like the dove's—like Hebe's—or
The maiden moon, or starlight seen afar,
Or like—some eyes I know but may not say.
Never were kisses gathered from such lips,
And not the honey which the wild bee sips
From flowers that on the thymy mountains grow
Hard by Ilissus, half so rich:—Her brow
Was darker than her hair and arched and fine,
And sunny smiles would often often shine
Over a mouth from which came sounds more sweet
Than dying winds, or waters when they meet
Gently, and seem telling and talking o'er
The silence they so long had kept before.

THE LAST SONG.

Must it be?—Then farewell,
Thou whom my woman's heart cherished so long:
Farewell, and be this song
The last, wherein I say "I loved thee well."

Many a weary strain
(Never yet heard by thee) hath this poor breath
Uttered, of Love and Death,
And maiden grief, hidden and chid in vain.

Oh! if in after years
The tale that I am dead shall touch thy heart,
Bid not the pain depart;
But shed, over my grave, a few sad tears.

Think of me—still so young,
Silent, tho' fond, who cast my life away,
Daring to disobey
The passionate Spirit that around me clung.

Farewell again ; and yet,
Must it indeed be so—and on this shore
Shall you and I no more
Together see the sun of the Summer set?

For me, my days are gone :
No more shall I, in vintage times, prepare
Chaplets to bind my hair,
As I was wont: oh 'twas for you alone.

But on my bier I'll lay
Me down in frozen beauty, pale and wan,
Martyr of love to man,
And, like a broken flower, gently decay.

STANZAS.

She died—she died;—yet, still to me
She comes, in sad and sober dreaming,
And from her hair a pale light streaming
Shews her as she was wont to be.

She stands in beauty by me still:
Alas! that Death two hearts should sever,
(The father and the child) who ever
Loved, and were so inseparable.

Still are her brow and bosom white;
Her raven hair the one adorning,
And her eyes, sweet as the break of morning,
Shine thro' like stars from the darkest night.

If the quick lustre of her eye—
(Can such then sparkle from the grave?)
Be false, may I live still the slave
Of this so charming phantasy.

It matters not, to me, from what
Or whom she gains her beauty now;
I see my child's own sinless brow,
And die—if I believe it not.

ON A ROSE.

Oh! thou dull flower, here silently dying:
And wilt thou never, then,—never resume
Thy colour or perfume?
Alas! and but last night I saw thee lying
Upon the whitest bosom in the world,
And now thy crimson leaves are parched and curled.

Is it that Love hath with his fiery breath
Blown on thee, until thou wast fain to perish,
(Love who so strives to cherish,)
And is the bound so slight 'tween life and death—
A step but from the temple to the tomb?
Oh! where hath fled thy beauty—where thy bloom?

For me, last night I envied thee thy place,
So near a heart which I may never gain,
And now—perhaps in pain,
Thou'rt losing all thy fragrance—all thy grace.
—And yet, it was enough for thee to lie
On her breast, for a moment, and then—die.

SONNET.

On a sequester'd Rivulet.

THERE is no river in the world more sweet,
Or fitter for a sylvan poet's dream,
Than this romantic solitary stream,
Over whose banks so many branches meet,
Entangling :— a more shady bower or neat
Was never fashioned in a summer dream,
Where Nymph or Naiad from the hot sunbeam
Might hide, or in the waters cool her feet.
—A lovelier rivulet was never seen
Wandering amidst Italian meadows, where
Clitumnus lapses from his fountain fair;
Nor in that land where Gods, 'tis said, have been;
Yet there Cephisus ran thro' olives green,
And on its banks Aglaia bound her hair.

SONNET.

PERHAPS the lady of my love is now
Looking upon the skies. A single star
Is rising in the East, and from afar
Sheds a most tremulous lustre: Silent Night
Doth wear it like a jewel on her brow:
But see, it motions, with its lovely light,
Onwards and onwards thro' those depths of blue,
To its appointed course stedfast and true.
So, dearest, would I fain be unto thee,
Stedfast for ever,—like yon planet fair;
And yet more like art *thou* a jewel rare.
Oh! brighter than the brightest star, to me,
Come hither, my young love; and I will wear
Thy beauty on my breast delightedly.

THE END.

W. SHACKELL, Printer, Johnson's-court,
Fleet-street, London.

MIRANDOLA

A TRAGEDY

BY

BARRY CORNWALL.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON

JOHN WARREN, OLD BOND STREET.

MDCCCXXI.

LONDON:
SHACKELL AND ARROWSMITH, JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE fact of a father having married the lady betrothed to his son, occurred in the case of Philip the 2nd of Spain, and of D'Este, one of the Dukes of Ferrara. This fact I have borrowed, as well as the circumstance of the father condemning his son to death. In other respects, the Tragedy is, as far as I know, original. The character of the sensitive Mirandola, more particularly, is unborrowed.

That the Tragedy has succeeded so well must be ascribed, no doubt in a material degree, to the great exertion of the performers; and the pleasant task remains to me of saying how much I am sensible of the really masterly delineation which Mr. Macready gave of the

varying and difficult character of Mirandola, and of the high and perfectly admirable portrait which Mr. C. Kemble embodied of the son. Indeed I owe my best thanks to ALL concerned in the representation of the Tragedy, to Mrs. Faucit, Miss Foote (the beautiful representative of Isidora) Mr. Abbott, Mr. Egerton, and Mr. Connor; for *all* were most zealous, and exerted their talents with the greatest possible effect.

I must not let this opportunity pass of saying that I owe much to Mr. Macready, whose kind and valuable suggestions induced me to concentrate the incidents in the latter part of the play more than I had originally intended to do. He will, I hope, be content with this sincere but very inadequate acknowledgement of the friendly interest which he has evinced throughout all the progress of the play.

B. C.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. CHAPMAN.

(WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.)

THOUGH, for two hundred years, the stage has been
A varying story, shifting scene by scene
From wit to ribaldry, as veered the age,
'Till both were lost in one wide sea of rage;
Yet, for a time, a crowd of mighty men
Flourished in Britain, their sole arms—the pen,
The Poet's pencil, dipp'd in living light,
That flowed from beaming day or starry night;
Their music such as sprang from winds or floods,
Their colours those which hung the waving woods,
The rocks, the vallies, and the circling sky;
Their spirit the same which has thro' years gone by
Lived—oh! and still, as fair as in its youth,
Survives,—immutable, immortal TRUTH;
Their words—(no heavy coinage of the brain,
Wrought with dull toil and uninspired pain,)
Came from the gently-stricken heart's rebound,
Like natural echoes from some pleasant sound.

Of late some Poets of true mind have writ
Lines that have relished of the ancient wit:
To-night, another, not unknown—yet one
Who feels that much is to be lost—and won,
Comes with a few plain words, honestly told,
Like those his mightier masters spoke of old,
And anxious that his story may by you
Be found to every answering feeling true.—
On no huge sounding words he rests his fame;
No mighty sentences his pride proclaim:
To woo you—win you,—as they did of yore,
In better times, he asks—and asks no more.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

John, Duke of Mirandola . .	Mr. Macready.
Guido, his Son	Mr. C. Kemble.
Hypolito, Son of Isabella . .	Miss Boden.
Casti, Julio, } Friends of Guido . .	Mr. Abbot. / Mr. Connor.
Gheraldi, a Monk . . .	Mr. Egerton.
Curio	Mr. Comer.
Marco, an Innkeeper	Mr. Atkins.

Pesaro, Andrea, Piero, Nobles, Servants, &c.

Isidora, Duchess of Mirandola .	Miss Foote.
Isabella, Sister of the Duke .	Mrs. Faucit.
Beatrice, Wife of Marco . .	Miss Shaw.

SCENE—At and near Mirandola, in Italy.

MIRANDOLA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The outer yard of an inn on the road to Mirandola.

BEATRICE *enters from the Inn.*

Bea. I thought I heard the trampling of horses. Marco!—There are so few travellers who pass this road, that really we must make the most of all who come. Hark! that was certainly a horse's step.—Marco!—There, again: somebody is certainly coming. *(She listens.)*

MARCO *enters.*

Marco. By Saint Peter, this will be a rare day to go to sleep in. There'll be nothing awake to-day but the sun, and my wife. Why, Beatrice, what's the matter? Are you bent double before your time? She looks like Fine-ear, in the Fairy tale, who listens to hear the grass grow. Beatrice!

Beatrice. Hark! don't you hear?

Marco. Hear? no: and yet—Ha! I do hear some-

thing now. Some travellers, I suppose: yes, they are now almost close to us. They stop. Ah! there they are at the end of the orchard.—Go in, go in and prepare breakfast for them. There never yet was a traveller who had'nt a good appetite. (BEATRICE *goes in.)* A good clever girl that, tho' she talks more than she need at times; but, what!—there's no one perfect. Now if these gallants should be coming to the merry-making at Court, which was held yesterday, in honor of the Duke's marriage that happened some time ago, why they'll be a day too late, that's all.—So, who is this?

ANDREA *enters.*

Andrea. Are you the landlord of this house?

Marco. I am.

Andrea. The Duke's son, Lord Guido, is here on his way home from Naples. Get some refreshment ready, and be quick.

Marco. The Duke's son?

Andrea. Yes.—Why what's the matter? The Duke's son, I said.

Marco. What he who died?

Andrea. Died!—Nonsense! how could he be here if he died? he was only wounded.

Marco. Not dead? that's odd. Is he coming to the Court feast?

Andrea. We've heard of no feast. What is it for? Is any body married, or dead?

Marco. Hush! your master's here.—Beatrice!

GUIDO, CASTI, *and* JULIO *enter.*

Julio. Ah! Signior Casti, you were gallant ever,
At home and in the field.—Here, fellow; shew
Our servants where the horses may be housed.

BEATRICE *enters.*

Marco. I will, my lord.

Casti. Take care of mine,—a grey.

Guido. This is the prettiest girl that I have seen
Since I left Naples.

Bea. Oh! my lord.

Casti. You have forgot poor Bayard.

Guido. No, indeed. Good fellow,
Go with this man, and he will show you where
A berry-brown horse is panting, wet and white
With foam.—Carlo's gone onwards?

Serv. Yes, my lord.

Guido. That horse—he is a friend of mine, (the best
That ever bore a man thro' blood and death;)
Take excellent care of him as you expect
Requital. [MARCO *and* SERVANT *exeunt.*
Thanks, good Casti, many thanks:
Old Bayard too should thank you if he could.

Julio. Now, hostess, we are hungry travellers: go
And strip your larder of it's best: we come
With desperate thoughts against it.

Guido. Pretty hostess!
Are *you* the hostess of this pleasant place?

Beat. Yes, my lord, yes.

Casti. You make her blush.

Julio. No more.—Good hostess, hie thou in and quickly make
The best of preparation: we shall be
With thee anon. [BEATRICE *exit.*

Guido. We shall come to thee soon.

Julio. Why, my dear lord, this peasant seems to take
Your fancy.

Guido. Oh! I like a pretty face
At court or in a cottage.

Casti. And in camp?

Guido. No; there one's thoughts are taught to swerve
From their more natural bent.—I hate the camp.
I hate it's noise and stiff parade,—it's blank
And empty forms, and stately courtesy.
Where between bows and blows, a smile and a stab,
There's scarce a moment. Soldiers always live
In idleness or peril: both are bad.

Casti. I fear that you are right, indeed.

Julio. How! right?

Guido. I am.—
Give me an intellectual nobler life;
Not fighting like the herded elephants, which,
Beckon'd by some fierce slave, go forth to war,
And trample in the dust their fellow brute.
But let *me* live amongst high thoughts and smiles
As beautiful as love; with grasping hands,

And a heart that flutters with diviner life
Whene'er my step is heard.
Julio. Why, what is this?
Casti. A picture of a happier lot, dear friend,
Than you and I have known.
Julio. Had I not seen
You both fight bravely,—better than myself,
I should have doubted you.—What! rail at war—
Bright eyed Bellona?—Oh! for shame, for shame!
I must forswear your company, my Lord.
For me, I like all folks who follow war,
Down to the very suttler: I am even
Friend to the commissary.
Guido. Ay, when you run
In debt.
Casti. With empty pockets.
Guido. Or—or when
He feasts his friends.
Casti. Or falls in love, and wishes
To give a trifle to some girl.
Guido. Indeed, he *is* too much addicted—while I speak,
I grieve to talk thus of him—
Julio. Moral Lord!
Oh! this is well. Go on; and, Signior, you
Who smile but once a week, (then not for joy,)—
*You smile now; yet, you must remember ('tis

* The reader is requested to observe that this mark * designates the com-

Scarce two years since,) at Baiæ, a pale girl.
Who lived so much in private?
Casti. Spare her: nay,
She was unfortunate.
Julio. And you?
Guido. Was kind.
I know the story: touch not on it now.
It is a melancholy tale, fit only
For the fire-side and winter: some dull day,
When the clouds leave a shadow on your brow,
I'll tell it to you.
Casti. Be content; I was
Her friend,—a father, but no more: believe 't.
Julio. Must I? Well, be it:†—but this hostess stays
A long time 'ere she summons us, methinks.
If I eat double 'tis no fault of mine.
I may as well go in,—and——
Guido. But be civil.
Julio. Civil? I'll be as loving.
Casti. Ay, and brief
In your discourse.
Guido. I shall keep watch o'er you.
Julio. And th' hostess?
Guido. Ay; over both wolf and lamb.

[JULIO *exit into the inn.*

mencement, and this† the termination of every passage which is omitted on the representation of the Tragedy.

Casti. I never saw you in so gay a mood:
Have you heard news?
Guido. No;—no.
Casti. I fear I've marred
Your gaiety.
Guido. Ah! no: 'twas but a trick
To cheat away sad folly.—I have heard
Nothing: my courier never, as you know,
Returned: my letters are unanswer'd:—From
My father (yet he was kind once) I might have borne
This fearful silence; but from her—Oh! her
Whom like a star I worshipped.—Pshaw! my eyes
Are like a girl's to-day. I've no doubt
But all is well.
Casti. I hope so.
Guido. Ay; *I* hope.
Why should I fear?—you do not fear? you know
Nothing, good Casti, of my love?
Casti. Nothing: be calm.
Guido. I know not how it is;
But a foreboding presses on my heart
At times, until I sicken.*—I have heard,
And from men learned, that before the touch
(The common, coarser touch) of good or ill,—
That oftentimes a subtler sense informs
Some spirits of the approach of 'things to be.'
Fate comes before it's time; like Hope or Fear
Reverting on the soul, with surer aim.
Casti. What more!†

Guido. Oh! I've a deep dull sense of pain to come
Clinging upon my heart.
Casti. So lovers talk;
And feel, perhaps.* Suspense to them is as
A hideous ghost, changing it's shape for ever.
Thus in wild evenings children's fears, you know,
Shape devils out of shadows.†—Oh! be gay.
Morning will soon be here, and she you sigh for
Will smile these dreams away.
Guido. May it be so!
Let's talk no more of this at present.—Where
Is Julio?
Casti. Likeliest by the cottage fire,
Helping the pretty hostess.
Guido. Let us go.
You think, then, she——
Casti. Oh! I think
Not of her; save that she is fair and true.
Stifle these fears: why, in some three hours hence
You'll see her
Guido. So I shall, indeed.
Casti. Let's drink
Her health in purest water.
Guido. No: in wine.
Casti. In wine then, be it. High Falernian?
Curio. Ay,
In nectar. Why, methinks, these dreams of mine
Are almost banished.
Casti. With yourself remains

The power to do't. Be lord of your own mind.
The dread of evil is the worst of ill;
*A tyrant, yet a rebel, dragging down
The clear-eyed judgment from its spiritual throne,
And leagued with all the base and blacker thoughts
To overwhelm the soul.† But come, our friend
Waits, and—the pretty hostess.
Guido. There: my hand
Is firm as 'tis in battle.
Casti. So it is.
Now then: nay, go you first. I'll follow. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Garden of the Duke's Palace.

ISIDORA, ISABELLA, HYPOLITO.

Isab. Cheer thee, dear sister: nay—these mournful looks
Shame all our smiles.
Hyp. Dear aunt!
Isab. Were I the Duke,
I should be jealous of your grief.
Isid. Madam!
Isab. Indeed.—A jealous thing is happiness,—
And delicate too, for round it all must be

Warm like itself and pleasant, else it flies;
Like summer birds from winter.
Isid. Yesterday,—
It's ceremony and toil have worn me down.
Forgive me for it: I am scarcely used
As yet to your court splendors.—I shall be
A Duchess shortly, such as you could wish.
I was not born, you know, to princely pomp,
And it sits ill on me. Hypolito!
Why are *you* sad, dear boy? I thought I was
The only mocker here.
Isab. 'Wake, dreaming child!
Your aunt, the Duchess, speaks to you.
Hyp. Dear Lady. *(Takes* ISIDORA'S *hand.)*
Isab. A pretty gallant: so,—in time he'll break
A promise smoothly.
Isid. I hope not; yet there are
None of his faithless sex who cannot feign.
Isab. Except my brother?
Isid. Ay: except the Duke.
But come, Hypolito; I never hear
Now how your falcon flies, nor of the barb
Your uncle gave you.—How is this? it was
A true Arabian, was it not?
Hyp. Indeed
I scarcely know. I have not rid of late.
Isab. He keeps his chamber, like a languid girl,
And reads romance.—"Indeed, I scarcely know—"

Why that was lisped forth like a girl.—For shame!
What do you know then, sirrah?
Hyp. Oh! I know
By heart, by heart, those gentle stories which
My Aunt (before she *was* my Aunt) gave to me,
And told me with a smile, such as I never
Saw on her face again,—'These lines were strung
'By frenzied Tasso whom a princess scorned,
'And these flew forth from Ariosto's quill,
'And these sad Petrarch, who lamented long
'Laura his love, once writ; and some there were
'Inscribed by great Boccaccio's golden pen,
'Mirthful and mournful, fit for every heart.'
Isab. A pretty list: and is this all you read?
Oh! I must look to you.—The father comes;
In haste, it seems.

GHERALDI *enters.*

Well, father?
Gher. The fair blessing of the day
Rest on you all.—Madam, my duty bends
Before you.
Isid. I am thankful, father, for
Your blessing.
Isab. Thanks, Gheraldi; but you came
In haste, Sir: how was this? Have any news
Reached our so quiet place?
Hyp. I do not like the book you gave me, father.
Isab. Silence!—You do not answer, father. How!

Isid. Come here, Hypolito, come.

[ISIDORA *and* HYPOLITO *talk apart.*

Isab. In your look
I read a—something that I would not read.
The Duchess hears us not; you need not drop
Your eyes thus cautiously. Speak freely to me;
What is't?

Gher. Be patient, Madam: you will need
Great store of patience. Guido——

Isab. Ha; speak lower.—Hypolito!

Hyp. Talk kindly to me.

Isab. Well;
Kiss me, and now begone: the father has
Some words for me. Perhaps, dear sister, you——

Isid. I was about to leave you.

Isab. Do not think
I wish that: but some business, such as you
Would think but tedious, calls me hence.

Isid. Farewell! [ISIDORA *and* HYPOLITO *exeunt.*

Isab. Father, if I can read your mind, (and now
I ought to read it,) you have news will call
My spirit into action:—Is it so?
Well! I can act. How I can think, you know.
How I will give my cunning force, and weave
The subtle threads of many a project 'round
My victim's brain, thou—thou shalt see.

Gher. I have
Not told my news.

Isab. I see it 'ere you speak.
It is of Guido: he has then discovered?—
Gher. Not so.
Isab. Then all is well.
Gher. Why, still not so.
He has not yet discovered—
Isab. Father, speak.
Am I to guess and guess and still mistake,
While you, with all the tidings on your tongue,
Keep all from me! What you know, boldly speak.
Gher. Lord Guido, then, is well: that is some news;
For when we last heard of him, he lay sick
Upon his bed at Naples.
Isab. Yes,—go on.
Gher. He knows not of his father's marriage yet:
But being impatient at the silence which
His Isidora, and his father kept,
He left the South (forgetting smaller ills)
And comes straight to Mirandola!
Isab. Indeed!
He must be stopped.
Gher. He should have been, had I
Known of his coming; but he is here already.
Isab. What! not arrived?
Ghér. In two hours hence he'll stand
Before his father.
Isab. Has the Duke yet learned
His coming.

Gher. No: I've kept the secret; but
It must be known, and quickly.
Isab. And those letters—
Those letters of the Duke; they never reached
Guido at Naples—of this you are sure!
Gher. Never; nor those he wrote unto the Duke,
Except that one first telling that he lived;
(Dead Gaspero was an honest knave to us—)
I hold them safe: for in them lies my life.
Isab. Why then go bravely to the Duke;
And tell him Guido comes: tell him, at once,
That all the bright tears Isidora shed,
Dropped for his son.
Gher. Ha! but *I* cautioned her
(Because the Duke was jealous) when she heard
That he still lived and loved her, to conceal
The name of Guido.—How shall this be answered?
Isab. Who can betray? Why did she marry him?
Gher. Nay,—'twas her mother's want—
Isab. Well, well: now go
Unto the Duke (I know his humour well)
And tell this. Of his marriage you can say——
Gher. What?
Isab. You can hint that haply Guido may
Clothe him in ignorance,—perhaps pretend
He wrote to say he lived, and so forth: ha?
Tell him of Guido's friendship for those men—
Those men who did rebel: and you can shew

How good a casuist you are, father, when
A doubt springs up; and you can pour a balm
(You have both sting and honey, like the bee,)
If there be need, and—pshaw! I school my master.
Gher. You flatter, gracious lady: you are still
A keen displomatist: you surely cannot
Need my poor service.
Isab. What is this?—Gheraldi!
What is it you ask?
Gher. Nothing: no, tho' you said——
Isab. I say so still: my interest at Rome
Is great as ever. You shall have, be sure,
The Cardinal's hat, when old Galotti dies.
Gher. Have I your word for this?
Isab. Sir, be content;
I give my honourable word.
Gher. Enough.
Isab. And now farewell. Be careful, Sir;
Ay, and successful, and the conclave shall
Have its most subtle spirit to boast of yet. [*Exit.*
Gher. Dear lady, fare you well.—Now for the Duke.
He is as shifting as the April wind:
And how to break this news I know not. Guido
By this has got my letter, and knows that
His love is here; no more. And now—and now,
Shall I go on? Pshaw! rather shall I doubt?
Do I not see those earthly gods mine own,
Power, wealth, high reputation, (holy cheat!)

Like dazzling sun-beams on my stricken eye
They blind, yet lead me onwards. I shall be
A Cardinal: Aye, Pope perhaps. What more
Need I to teach me wisdom? Now for the Duke. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Duke's private chamber.

DUKE *and* ISIDORA *discovered—the* DUKE *writing.*

CURIO *waiting.*

Duke. Here; send this pacquet, my good Curio,
Unto our brother Mantua: this dispatch
Unto Modena. You have nothing else
To speak of?
Curio. Nothing, gracious Sir.
Duke. Farewell.
Yet stay, if—no, 'twas nothing: fare you well.
[CURIO *exit.*
Forgive me that I thus neglect you, love.
—Why, my dear Isidora, yesterday
Has worn you to a shadow.
Isid. Oh! not so.
Duke. In faith it has.—Dear girl, I know you hate
These empty pageantries. Jove! so do I.
I'd rather be in battle, and weighed down

By steel and iron than by these idle gauds.
But we must play our part, my sweet one, in
This silly world. Could I order things here,
Half of the moon I'd waste in war: the rest
I'd give to Cupid.

Isid. So: not all to love then?

Duke. Why, no — yet I am wrong; for Oh! with you
Who could desert the chamber for the camp?
Not I. I would be with you ever—ever.

Isid. That were too long.

Duke. Too long, my Isidora?

Isid. Ay: 'Ever' is a long time, my dear lord:
Love has no such eternity.

Duke. Indeed!

Isid. Indeed, 'tis so. Life even has its end;
And love cannot be longer sure than life.

Duke. It is: or else 'tis nothing.—Did I think
That in the narrow limit of this world
Sweet love were bound—*Did *I* fear that beyond
These earthy barriers (which our winged thoughts
Still strive to over-fly, and still in vain,)
Love were no resident,† I would—but you—
You are a traitor to the rose crown'd God:
I'll kiss you in revenge.

Isid. You should not punish
One who is ignorant only.

Duke. Punish! How!

Will that be punishment? I said that I
Would kiss you, love.

Isid. I know it—in revenge.

Duke. True; in revenge. Revenge is bitter sweet:
And in its rich completion lies as well
Gall as oblivious balm: a paradox
Of passion is revenge. 'Tween you and me,
Fair Isidora, let it never live.

Isid. I hope not, Sir.

Duke. It shall not. Mark! I speak
More boldly here than you. I know my heart:
And your's too can I read.

Isid. What! read my heart?

Duke. I spoke in jest: you tremble: I am calm
(You see't) as conscious love—or fate—or death.

Isid. I'm often thus: pray take no heed of it.
You trembled too, I thought.

Duke. Feel that I do not. [*Puts out his hand.*

Isid. I did not note your hand, but thro' your voice
There ran a tremulous chord which made me—think.

Duke. Of what?

Isid. That you were angry: nothing more.

Duke. Oh! then you far mistake me. I am not
A leaf blown to and fro' by every breath:
I am as stedfast as the oak;—ay, more,
*As little to be shook or turned aside
From my vowed purpose as the based rock,
Which when the blasts of thundering winter tear

The pines away from their strong rifted holds,
Looks calmly as tho' 'twere sun-shine still,—and smiles.†
Isid. I am glad you are so calm.
Duke. Why are you glad—why glad
My Isidora? You can ne'er have cause
To dread my anger?
Isid. Oh! I hope not.
Duke. You
Could never dread me, Isidora?
Isid. Never.
For never could I do you wrong, my lord.
Duke. My own sweet love! Oh! my dear peerless wife!
By the blue sky and all its crowding stars
I love you better—Oh! far better than
Woman was ever loved. There's not an hour
Of day or dreaming night but I am with thee:
There's not a wind but whispers of thy name,
And not a flower that sleeps beneath the moon
But in its hues or fragrance tells a tale
Of thee, my love, to thy Mirandola.
Speak, dearest Isidora, can you love
As I do? Can—but no, no; I shall grow
Foolish if thus I talk. You must be gone
You must be gone, fair Isidora, else
The business of the Dukedom soon will cease.
I speak the truth, by Dian. Even now
Gheraldi waits without (or should) to see me

In faith, you must go: one kiss, and so, away.

Isid. Farewell, my lord.

Duke. We'll ride together, dearest,
Some few hours hence.

Isid. Just as you please; farewell! [*Exit.*

Duke. Farewell! With what a waving air she goes
Along the corridor. How like a fawn;
Yet statelier.—Hark! no sound however soft
(Nor gentlest echo) telleth when she treads;
But every motion of her shape doth seem
Hallowed by silence. Thus did Hebe grow
Amidst the Gods, a paragon; and thus—
Away! I'm grown the very fool of love.

CURIO *enters.*

Curio. The father—

Duke. Bid him come. [CURIO *exit.*

I never saw
My beauty look so well: *the summer light
Becomes her, tho' she shames it, being so fair.
Methinks I've cast full twenty years aside,
And am again a boy. Every breath
Of air that trembles thro' the window bears
Unusual odour.†

GHERALDI *enters.*

Welcome, father, welcome:
If you have any good to ask, be quick,
For I am bountiful to-day. The tide
Of my free humour cannot last—nor ought,

Else should I soon be beggar'd. What's i' the air?—
Some subtle spirit runs thro' all my veins.
Hope seems to ride this morning on the wind,
And joy outshines the sun. Why, what is this?

Gher. My gracious lord!

Duke. Speak out. Your tone is cold
As the ringing sound a footstep strikes from out
The frosted earth. I am like spring, rejoicing.
Father, I hate these mournful moods: I hate 'em.
Be joyful, Sir, or look so.

Gher. My dear lord,
I have some news, which while this spirit lasts,
I almost fear to tell. 'Twill strike cold on
Your mind, my lord; but—but it must be told.
Your son, my lord,——

Duke. How! well; go on.

Gher. Lord Guido will be here, my lord, within
An hour.

Duke. Again, Sir,—speak again.

Gher. Your son,
Lord Guido will be here within this hour.

Duke. I'm glad to hear it.
He uses little ceremony: well!
How learned you this?

Gher. His courier has arrived,
Who left him scarce two hours ago: he then
Was coming hither strait.

Duke. Has he not written?

Gher. He has not; but—(and this indeed seems strange,)
His servant says—tho' this must be surmise—
That his young master still is ignorant of
Your highness' marriage.
Duke. That's impossible!
I wrote to him twice—more.
Gher. Yes, Sir; but——
Duke. But what?
Speak!
Gher. Did your highness ever hear the name
O' the friend the Duchess mourned so?
Duke. Never: she
Wished not to tell it; so, altho' my mind
Dislikes such secrets, I have never asked.
Gher. Lord Guido then never confided his
Attachment to you?
Duke. His—his? Never.
Gher. Never?
Duke. Never. I feel a faintness o'er me. Never.
Did he—did he—
Gher. Another time, my lord,
Let's speak of this. As to your son's return——
Duke. Monk! I must have your answer.
Gher. Well: I have heard
My lord, that he——
Duke. I listen: go on.

Gher. That he
Once loved the Duchess.
Duke. How! great Heaven! am I
Awake?
Gher. I would not have disclosed this tale
To your Highness, but——
Duke. Be silent. Can it be
That he (I know not what I say) has been
Deceived?
Gher. Your Highness wrote to him before
Your marriage?—No.
Duke. No; not befor't: we thought
That he was dead; yet when the news (glad news
I thought it,) came that still he lived, I sent
Direct to Naples.
Gher True; by Gaspero.
Duke. But wherefore,—nay, how was 't you dared
conceal
From me that he had loved her? Speak to that
Gher. I thought it a boyish fancy, soon to change.
Yet that he loved her once, (madly) I can
Avouch.
Duke. He is not apt to change.
Gher. Why that—
When first I knew he had not written home,
Struck on my mind. I own it.
Duke. [*aside.*]—Upon mine
It falls as cold as winter. You should not
Have kept it from me. 'Twas a fault.

Gher. Nay, Sir,—

Duke. O Heaven! had I but known for whom those tears
Were shed:—but *still* she weeps: Ah! wherefore still?
He is alive.

Gher. My lord!

Duke. Perhaps he comes
Here to reproach or make a shew of grief:
Perhaps—Did you not speak?

Gher. Yes, Sir; your son——

Duke. Did I not watch him thro' his headstrong youth,
This fault forgiving and forgetting that—
His friendship with that false Vitelli, whom
I hate as I hate shame—his strange request
For those three rebels (that was never cleared)
Marni, Saletto, Rossi? you know this.

Gher. If I might but advise—

Duke. Be dumb, Sir. I
Can be my own good counsel. Did I not
Write, and so kindly too? *Did—did he come
Quite straight from Naples?

Gher. Yes, my lord; I hear
He only staid at Count Vitelli's house;
And there not long.

Duke. At Count Vitelli's? He
Can never pass that traitor's den. What spell
Doth drag him there?

Gher. None that I know of, Sir,
But,† may I now advise? If aught be wrong

Touching Vitelli's friendship with your son.
(Tho' I hope nothing *is* wrong) or—or if
He loves the lady Isidora still,————

Duke. Death! thou false monk!—Sir, if your tongue but utter
A word of that—What! love her? love!

Gher. I meant ————

Duke. You said he loved.

Gher. Did I? pray pardon me.
This news has ruffled me, my lord. I beg
That you'll forget. My mouth is filled to-day
With errors.

Duke. Yet should he *indeed* love her?

Gher. If then, my lord, your son should but pretend
To love, and urge you to injustice————

Duke. Ha!
That's well—well thought of. Oh! there's many a knave
About me (that I feel) too ready still
To second old Vitelli's bloody hand.
Can he be foe to me? I will not think it.
Yet I'll be calm, and wary.

Gher. Some one comes.

[CARLO *enters.*

Carlo. Your Highness!

Duke. Speak!

Carlo. Lord Guido will be here
Almost————

Duke. Go to him, good Gheraldi. Leave us.

[CARLO *exit.*

Receive him, father, and before he comes
To me, inform him (mark if honestly
He take the news,) that I am married.—When
You have told this, say that I wish his presence:
Yet, first announce him; so I may learn how far
His soul is bent to cunning.

Gher. I am gone.

Duke. Take good note, Sir.

Gher. I will.

Duke. Be sure you do! [*Exeunt separately.*

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Court-yard before the Palace.

GHERALDI.

Gher. He must not see the Duchess yet. These scenes
Of tears and quarrel but ill suit a court;
And the Duke loves decorum.—Now have I
Been confidant to father, and to son,—
To her (by virtue of my calling)—*her*,
And the proud Isabella. Had I not
A cowl, I fear a blush at times might tell
A story. Guido knows his love is here;
(Thus much I've written to him,) but that she
Is Duchess here, he knows not: so,—he comes.

Guido. [*without.*] Ha! ha!—well, as you please: I shall expect you.

GUIDO *enters, and is passing over in haste.*

Gher. My lord! lord Guido!

Guido. Ha! Gheraldi, you?
Where's Isidora? Is my father well?

Gher. Your father bids——

Guido. I'll see him presently:
But where's my love?

Gher. He has commanded me——

Guido. Not now, not now.
Where is she?

Gher. First, hear the Duke's message; nay.

Guido. Now by my soul, I shall be angry with you.
Say to your lord some ten,—five minutes hence,
I'll seek him in his study. You oppress me.
What do you mean that thus you shake your head
In silence—or is 't sorrow?—Ha! she's dead?

Gher. Not so, my lord.

Guido. Why all is well then;—yet,
(What do you mean?) you seem to mock my joy,
And lay a leaden hand upon the wings
Of all my hopes.—Oh! Isidora, where,
Where are *you* loitering now when Guido's here?
By the bright god of love, I'll punish you,
Idler, and press your rich red lips until
The colour flies.

Gher. My lord: nay, do not frown.
I have a story of deep interest, Sir.
It is my duty (my sad duty now,)
To break unto your ear some tidings.

Guido. Quick!

Gher. Your father, my dear lord, is married.

Guido. So.——

Gher. Reasons of state—

Guido. Keep 'em, good Monk, I have no stomach now
For any food but love.

Gher. Strong reasons did induce my lord ('twas when
You were reported dead) to seek a bride.
He left the common course that monarchs use,
And chose from out the land he govern'd, one
Who might have shamed the world.

Guido. That was not well,
At least.

Gher. I mean she was so fair, my lord.

Guido. I mark you. Well?

Gher. My lord your father (urged
By some state policy, and fearful lest
Your death should snap the link your friendship formed
'Tween him, and Count Navarro,)—

Guido. Chose his daughter?

Gher. No; not—not thus.

Guido. How then? Speak! Is my heart
Bursting? What is 't I fear? My very soul
Is sick, and full of some dismay, as tho'
Fate were upon me. If—I dare not ask:
I dare not, tho' a word would end it all.
Gheraldi! no, no, no: silence awhile:
I will not hear thee now. Oh! heaven and earth!
If it were so—it cannot be: it shall not.
Yet if it were——Oh! Isidora, you,
What *you*—She is as constant as the stars

That never vary, and more chaste than they.
Forgive, forgive me that I slander thee
Even in dreams. Gheraldi, now I'll listen,
And you shall tell your tale. I was a fool
Just now. Forgive me, father:—now.

Gher. I said your father did desire a bride
From out his realm. Navarro's daughter then
Was woo'd; now she is married: but he had
Two nieces.

Guido. Ay, I see't. My father saw
The lady Julia: yes, I see how 'twas;
It was so, was it not?

Gher. He saw her there.

Guido. Ay, ay: she was a pretty girl when last
I was at home: and so he married her?

Gher. He saw them both, Sir, with a favouring eye.
The lady Isidora then in tears——

Guido. True; they might not become her: yet she's fair.
When joy is in her eye 'tis like the light
Of Heaven: blue, deep and ethereal blue.
I would not wish a life more beautiful;
And, were she but a Saint, I'd worship her.
Sad Isidora! Did thine eyes indeed
Shower diamond drops for me? My gentle love!
*But Guido (thine) is come at last to kiss
The tears away for ever. Happiness
Looks out to find thee; shall it look in vain!

Gher. May I proceed, my lord?

Guido. I had forgot.
Where were we?
Gher. I was telling that† your father
Saw Count Navarro's nieces, and preferr'd
The elder.
Guido. You—you said he *married Julia.*
Gher. No, my lord: no.
Guido. Whom then? it cannot be.
Gher. My lord! I——
Guido. Monk! speak out: Curse on my trembling.
One word—a single word. Now:—tho' your breath
Carry damnation (as I think it does)
To every hope of mine, be quick, quick.—Now.
Stun me with sorrow, lest I feel too much,
And slay thee. What's her name—my father's bride?
Gher. 'Tis Isidora.
Guido. Thou has done't.
Gher. My lord!
Look up, my Lord! So—there: you're very pale.
Nay, for your father's sake.
Guido. Ha! ha! ha! ha!
Gher. Lord Guido! I—Gheraldi—speak to you.
Oh! well: I see you know me now Not so.
Nay, look more cheerfully.—You're better now?
Guido. Thou—thou knew'st all my love. Thou busy priest—
Gher. My lord.

Guido. Thou pander to my father's wish,
(He is no father, I disown him.) Thou—
Thou busy meddling Monk.
Gher. My lord, my lord,
This is not well!
Guido. Away! my mother? Oh! *my* mother was
As pure as purity. I will not talk
Of her who *is*—yet oh! what pity 'tis
That one so fair should now be full of blots,
And that a face which love had breathed upon
Should now be scarred all over. Once, I thought
That in her eyes, (how beautiful they were!)
Her soul shone out.
Gher. If you will let me speak—
Guido. But she is grown a harlot in my sight.
What! married to my father, to *my* father!
What! smile upon the son, and wed the sire,
Because—there's some strange cause. What blinding spell
Is there now hung between us and the Moon,
That dims the sights of women? There's a cause:
I dare not guess: I will not.
Gher. May I speak?
Guido. Father Gheraldi, you have done your errand.
Tell the Duke of Mirandola, his Son
Is now at ease.—Say that the news at first
Was somewhat stirring: but that he—ay, he
Forgives—forgets; no, never, never can

That soon forgot that all his life was blighted.
Say what you will, Sir.

Gher. But your father, now,
Expects you.

Guido. I'm too gallant, Sir; so tell him.
I'll pay my duty to the Duchess first;
Unto my—mother, since it must be so:
And when we have discuss'd some words, why then
I'll meet him. No more words, Sir.—Now, farewell!

[*Exeunt at different sides.*

SCENE II.

A Hall in the Palace.

Enter ISABELLA, *meeting* CASTI *and* JULIO.

Isab. Welcome unto Mirandola.

Casti. Many thanks.

Isab. Ah! Signior Julio! give you welcome, Sir.

Julio. *I thank you, Madam, thank you heartily.
A little leisure is welcome even to me.

Isab. You have not lost your spirits in the wars?

Julio. No Madam, much the same; I'm still, at least,
Your servant ever.

Isab. Oh! Sir,† we shall try
Your gallantry to-day: the Duke hath ordered

A feast in honour of his son.—Count Casti,
You've seen my brother?

Casti. Madam?

Isab. You are wrapt
In study, Sir: some fosse, or counterscarp,
Or siege, or ambuscade then filled your brain.

Casti. No, Madam, none.

Isab. Brief answer.—Have you seen
My brother yet?

Casti. I have not.

Isab. He will be
Rejoiced to see you. Ah!—yes, it is he.

Julio. Faith, 'tis the Duke: he looks more young than ever.

Casti. Now, to my mind, his eye is filled with care.

DUKE *enters.*

Duke. Ha! gentlemen, and friends, I'm glad to see
Such faces at Mirandola.

Casti. My lord,
We are your son's companions.

Duke. So I hear:
Therefore, ye are more welcome, Signior, [*To* JULIO.] I
Have heard of your good acts. Your sword is dulled
With carnage, I am told. Fair faces here
Have smiled, and gentle hearts have wished you well.

Julio. My Lord!

Duke. Indeed I hear 'twas so.

Isab. 'Tis true.

Duke. Signior, your deeds have filled the mouth of fame,
And you too have admirers; none more true
Than I. [*Takes* CASTI's *hand.*
Casti. My lord, you do me honour.
Duke. Sir,
I do myself much honour thus to take
A good man by the hand. You are not all
Soldier, and yet enough: I do not love
All courtier: I myself, you know, was once
Something (not much) o' the soldier.
Julio. Oh!—
Casti. My lord,
You have fought bravely; that the world well knows.
Julio. Your foes especially, my lord.
Duke. Oh! no.
I drew the sword for pastime: you for right.
Shall I not see my son?
Isab. He will be here
Speedily.
Julio. If I am right, I saw him talk
Just now with the confessor, old Gheraldi.
I'll bid him come to you.
Duke. Not so: stay, Sir.
I'll wait for my son's leisure. He is tired
Perhaps, and his too sensitive nature asks
Some quiet 'ere he sees me.—You have been
With him throughout the war, Sir, have you not?

Casti. I have, my lord.

Duke. I mean, attached to the same
Battalion?

Casti. 'Twas so.

Duke. Was he sad, or gay?

Casti. He has a natural gaiety that sits
Pleasantly on him, when no ill 's at hand:
But he is soon depressed and latterly————

Duke. Well latterly—you stop?

[ISABELLA *draws* JULIO *aside.*

Casti. Of late,
He has been ill, (wounded you know,) and grief—
Some secret sorrow wearing down his heart,
Has paled his cheek, and thinned it: and at times,
I've seen him fretted much beyond his custom.

Duke. Indeed! then must it be
The sun, (there is no cause beside,)—the Sun
Hath burnt these humours on him, and perhaps
Quickened the wholesome current of his blood,
'Till it outruns it's channels: *then, you know,
Come fevers, and in the abused brain
Distraction; so, before the sight diseased
Shadows will stalk, and ghosts of unreal ills:
Filling the bloated fancy 'till it bursts:
These things I know.†—But Guido——?

Casti. Oh! he will
Grow fresh again, now that his father's arms
Are open.

Julio. And his love's.

Duke. True, Signior,—as you say,
I see Gheraldi——True; my arms are open.
Excuse me, Signior Casti; I shall soon
See you again. Once more I bid you welcome.
You will not fail my banquet.

Casti. We are much
Honored, my lord.

Julio. My lord, we————

Isab. Come, Signior, you'll go with us;
I have some things to say.

Duke. Why doth the Friar loiter? Sirs, farewell!

Julio. We take our leave, my lord.

[*Exeunt* Isabella, Julio, *and* Casti.

Duke. He motions and retires.—Well, for the present
I must shake hands with patience, and be still.
*The day is lowering. What a beaming morn
It was; (ay, so was mine,) and now the clouds
Hang round about like some fierce accident
Which comes upon us as we think to reach
Safely our home.†—Now, should this boy have been
Cheated—it cannot be; old Gaspero
When he returned to die, gave fair account
Of the delivery of my letters.—When
I see him I will look into his soul:
And yet whene'er I see him
(True son of dead Bianca,) her pale smile
And scornful eye shoot thro' my very heart.

I would that I could think he meant me fair;
Why should I think him guilty—is he not
My son? Ah! did I mean his Mother fair?
And yet my will has made him now my heir?
Passing my Sister's son.—Can he still love her?
Ha! the Monk passes. So, now for the news. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

An Apartment of the Duchess.

ISIDORA *enters.*

Isid. He comes, he comes; and I must see him, too.
Oh! that I must.—Not yet.—I must, I *must.*
Hark! no, it is not he: It is my heart.
Will it not burst? My throat is full and choaking.
God! look upon me now, and save me!—Save!
He'll come and curse me—and it will be good;
For I have stolen his heart away, and flung
Mine own to ruin.—Ruin! Oh! that I
Could tell him all about my cruel lot,
And how I was betrayed, and lost for ever.
That Monk advised me—Oh! no more of that.
Ha! some one comes.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. [*after a pause.*] Madam, I come to pay
My duty to you.

Isid. Welcome; you are welcome.

Guido. I come to see how well her bridal dress
Becomes the Duchess of Mirandola.

Isid. You have been well, I hope?

Guido. Since when?

Isid. Since you—
You and I parted.

Guido. That's a long time, now.
I have forgot: how is 't that *you* remember?

Isid. I—I—Oh! pity me.

Guido. Weep, lady, weep.
Tears (yet they're bitter) purify the soul,
But your's is fair?—I know they ease the heart.
Mother!

Isid. Oh! Guido,—cruel, cruel, cruel!

Guido. [*aside.*] By Heaven, my courage begins to fail; and I
Grow womanish. Now let me wring her heart,
As she wrung mine.—Ah! there she weeps away
Almost to dissolution. How she bends,
Like one who sickens with remorse or love;
And she, perhaps, has been betrayed.—Alas!
Poor Isidora!

Isid. Ah!—you spoke?—you spoke?

Guido. 'Twas nothing.

Isid. Nothing? It was all to me.
'Twas happiness—no, that is gone: 'twas Hope:
'Twas pardon. Oh! my lord, (Guido no more,)

What have I done that you *can* use me thus?
I would not for the world, for all the world,
Put you to such great sorrow.
Guido. Shall I tell you?
Isid. Yes.
Guido. Listen to me, then. When you were young—
You are young still, and fair; the more's the pity:
But in the time I speak of, you were just
Bursting from childhood—with a face as fair
As tho' you had look'd in Paradise, and caught
It's early beauty: then, your smile was soft,
As Innocence before it learns to love.
And yet a woman's passion dwelt within
Your heart, as warm as Love.—But I am wrong?
Isid. Oh! no. I loved—
Guido. Indeed?
Isid. Indeed, indeed.
Guido. Well!—There was one who loved you too.
He said
That every hope he had rested on you.
He worshipped you, as Idols are adored
In countries near the sun. He gave his heart
So absolutely up, that had he thought
Then, that you would desert him, he'd have slain
Himself before you. You were his home, his heaven,
His wealth, his light, his mind, and life substantial.
But then he went away to the fierce wars,
(His honor was pledged for it,) and he left

You with an oath upon your soul behind.
'Twas said he died—

Isid. One said he saw you fall.

Guido. 'Twas said he died, and that she grieved awhile,
In virgin widowhood for him. At last,
A Duke—a reigning Duke, with wintry hair,
And subtle spirit, and— without a heart,
Came wooing to her, and so—you do not heed me—
And so she dried her tears, and (tho' the youth
Wrote that he lived,) she laugh'd, and left the son,
To marry with the father.

Isid. And you wrote
To me?

Guido. To you, and him.

Isid. I feared 'twas so.
*Now Heaven help me; for I'm wound about
By their strong toils, and there is no escaping.
Oh! I am worn, and broken down by grief.†
I dare not hope that you'll believe me, yet
That letter, Guido—Oh, I never knew it;
I had no letter—saw no letter.

Guido. What!
I wrote to you from Naples: from my bed
Where I lay languishing, by Gaspero,
My father's servant. Why, I wrote—(has there
Been cozening here!)—unto my father: *he*
Will not deny 't. Where is that slave?

Isid. Gaspero? He is dead.

Guido. He was my father's servant. Could he be
Unfaithful? No.
Isid. Your father prized him much.
Oh! it is too clear: we are both undone.
Guido. It may be;—nay, it is. But, 'ere I sink,
I will be righted some way, or revenged.
What! does he think to cheat me now, and wear
His prize abroad so boldly.—before *me?*
I'll have revenge.
Isid. He is your father, Guido.
Nay—
Guido. I disown him. He has lost his son.
Some parents shut their children from their homes,
(Young boys and gentle girls) but *I* abjure
My father in his age: let him go down
Into his grave alone.
Isid. Do not incense him.
Guido. Whom?
Isid. The Duke.
Guido. You're right.
Call him no more my father. No; I'll talk
As one man with his equal; or, perhaps,
I may wear something of superior scorn,
And drop a word or two of charity;
But that will be for thy sake, my poor girl!
Nay, dry your tears: and let us part awhile.
Isid. Farewell.
Guido. Oh! not farewell yet. I but go
To see the Duke. When shall we meet again?

Isid. We must not; yet—

Guido. We will, we will, once more.

Isid. Hark!—hush! your father comes.

Guido. Why, that is well.

We will (I'm glad of't) say at once good morrow,
Without more ceremony.

Isid. No; not now,
Not now, I cannot bear it.—Nay, for me.

Guido. That is a charm I cannot disobey.

Isid. Quick, quick, he comes!

Guido. We'll meet again. Remember! [ISID. *exit.*

CURIO *enters.*

Well, Sir?

Curio. My lord; his highness waits for you.

Guido. Where is he?

Curio. In his private chamber, Sir.

Guido. Tell him, I come. [CURIO *exit.*

Now, thou false Fortune, am I still thy fool?
Shall I see him, and, like a cheated child,
Believe each word he utters?—He was kind
Once, amidst all his pride, to me: but now
He has (has he not?)—robbed me—stolen away
The gem I love beyond the whole vast world,
And with a selfish vanity, here, before
My very eyes, he wears it to my shame—
His shame, and my deep sorrow. Now, my heart,
I have known thee firm in danger, droop not now!
[*Exit.*

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

(*The* DUKE *pacing up and down his room—at last he stops.*)

Duke. Hark! He stays long—but Isidora is
Prudent, I think,—I hope. His blood is quick,
But I will not doubt. Why should he loiter at
Vitelli's house,—that traitor's?—He stays long,
—A month ago and I was happy! No;
Not happy, yet encircled by deep joy,
Which tho' 'twas all around, I could not touch.
But it was ever thus with Happiness:
It is the gay to-morrow of the mind
That never comes.—Hark! no! 'twas but a door
That shut. And is my soul in such dismay,
That every petty whisper of the wind
Can scare me? Once—but that is passed, and now
Each sound is laden and each shadow filled
With fears: like exhalations in the dusk

They rise before me, wheresoe'er I tread.
Who's there?

CURIO *enters.*

Curio. Lord Guido
Is now without, my lord.
Duke. Bid him come in. [CURIO *exit.*
There is a strange confusion in my mind:
Perhaps my son, like a fair morning light,
May dispel all. He is here:—how pale he looks.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. I am come, my lord.
Duke. I,—I rejoice to see you. I am proud
To know my son has won so good a name.
Your honours will shame mine. Well, well, so be it.
On you has fallen now the task to lift
The fair and great name of Mirandola.
You have been absent long: too long.
Guido. My lord!
Duke. I am your father, Guido,
Guido. Oh! much more:
You are the Prince.
Duke. But still your father: nay—
Guido. My lord, there are some things which, little used,
Soon rust: such is respect. The name of Prince
Brings to the memory of many men
What they might else forget.

Duke. There is no cause
For this between us.
Guido. Pardon me: for once
Give me my humour.
Duke. As you please,—for once.
Come let us sit. What cause have you for this?
Guido. Cause! but—but let it pass.
Duke. Dear Guido.
Guido. Sir!
Duke. I do not understand—
Guido. And yet it is
As plain as day—as the full risen day.
But let us sit: with all my heart. [DUKE *sits.*
Duke. I am
Distressed, my son, to hear—
Guido. Ha! have you heard?
Duke. I hear the words you speak.
Guido. But understand not.
Was it not so, my lord? You hear—
Duke. I hear,
And see, and feel that now my only son,
And the first subject of my Dukedom, dares
To spurn his Prince,—his father; putting off
The garb of love, and—
Guido. Right: it is a cloak;
Under whose folds, fathers as well as sons,
Do things to shame the stars.
Duke. Guido, by Heaven!—

But this—this is not well, my son, no more of it.
I sent for you by the Confessor—
Guido. Ay,
That you may in my ear unload your mind
Of some dark secret; what is 't? Speak, my Lord.
If you have done aught that may leave a blot
On the bright annals of our house, confess,
And I will be as secret as deceit.
If you have been a tyrant, *and enslaved
The bodies or the minds of noble men,
Why, let me know it: or, if you have been
As poisonous as the serpent, or have mined,
Mole-like, your way beneath your neighbour's house,
And shook down all his happiness, confess it:
Or if, like the wilderness creature, you have prey'd
Even upon your young, I bid you still
To tell me and take comfort.†
Duke. I have been
Silent, my son—
Guido. Not so, not so; and yet you were in truth:
When slander came abroad, and I was absent,
You kept a politic silence; thus I've heard:
And, when I fell, you wept and kissed away
The bright warm tears from Isidora's cheek.
But I rose up again:—I rose, my lord,
Up from my bed of battle, and while the blood
Harden'd upon my wounds, I traced, with weak
And shaking fingers, a poor scrawl, reminding

Her of our love: you start? our love I said;
And you—you kept it from her. Speak? was 't so?
There's no one to betray you: should you blush,
I'll hush your virtue, like a murder, up.

Duke. Guido, you go too far: no more of this.

Guido. No more?

Duke. You'll anger me—I tell you this
For the last time. My blood is hot as your's.

Guido. Much hotter. Noble lord, if I may speak—

Duke. You may not, Sir. Death! shall I stand and suffer
These insolent taunts from you, my son, my slave,
My—

Guido. Slave!

Duke. Ay, Sir, whate'er may suit my humour.

Guido. Your highness's humour changes, that I know.

Duke. Sir, tho' it shift as often as the wind,
'Tis not for you to mark it. 'Tis my humour,
My spleen, my will.

CURIO *enters.*

Curio. Did my lord call?

Duke. Begone.
If then another word—I said, begone. [CURIO *exit.*
But no, no, no: no more of this: no more.

Guido. Then, you deny——?

Duke. Ah! Guido, this will bring

Bitter repentance, in some after day;
Till then be silent—still.
Guido. Oh! I will be
As silent as the grave you've dug for me.
*I'll be as wary as the fox, and subtle,
But like the adder, when I'm questioned, deaf.
And should you fall, (Princes may fall, my lord,
As the red leaves in autumn,—nay in spring;)
If your own tyranny, or others hate,
Rebels at home, or cozening friends abroad,
Or open foes should cast you down at last,—
Fear not; I will be there; close at your heart,
Just like the canker when the tree decays.†
Duke. When you have ended,——
Guido. I have said,—have done.
Duke. You have; and had I not
Some of that kindly blood, which you deny,
You must have spoken less. Guido, you
Have done me shameful wrong; but I have been
Patient,—as patient as my nature might:
I have born words; such words as never prince
Yet bore before from subject, or from son.
Guido. Perhaps,—
Duke. Speak out.
Guido. Perhaps, I have been warm;
But, no,—no.
Duke. As you please. Your humour turns
Quickly as mine, it seems; but it shall be
My humour to forget. If, after this,

In your distemper'd judgment—but no more.
—Your mother—

Guido. Ah! indeed no more, no more.

Duke. The Duchess of Mirandola expects
To see you. Come, I will go with you,—now.

Guido. I—I have seen her.

Duke. So: 'twas well.

Guido. I bade
Gheraldi tells you that I had gone thither.

Duke. 'Tis true; he told me (I remember now,)
That you had gone to pay your duty there.
She was rejoiced to see you?

Guido. No; not much.

Duke. How? not rejoiced? it was not well to meet
My son, and not rejoice; but you must pardon.
She has been ill, and the full summer moon
Sways at will women's fancies.

Guido. You are gay.

Duke. Why not? I have my wife here, and my son
The one is beautiful, the other brave.
I have no curse that clings to me: no fear
That enemies or *friends can do me harm.
There's not a traitor in the realm could live
Now undetected.

Guido. Traitors! there are none.

Duke. Oh! be not sure. When first the snake puts on
His summer-skin, he looks not loathsome: 'tis

When he's contract and wrinkled, we begin
To fear or hate him.†—But these things are not
Fit for a day like this. We should be gay.
Guido. I'll do my best.
Duke. Who can ask more? Come then;
*We'll speak no more of the serpent; yet it was
The circling emblem of eternity,
And in its terrible folds this world and all
Its host of strange and proud inhabitants,
With proud men at the head, was compass'd once.
If 'twere so now, it would be well, methinks,
If the lithe thing would draw its sinuous shape
Closer and closer, till—but I forget
The festival.
Guido. You do in truth, my lord:
That was a curious fancy.
Duke. Heed it not:
I speculate at times, as well as you.†
But you must alter. You must be gay,
In dress as looks. Now let us part. We'll meet
Presently, in the feasting room.
Guido. I will
Be with you presently, redressed. [*Exit.*
Duke. Farewell.
Redress'd!—Now, what a querulous boy is this,
Cheating his spleen with words. Insolent words!—
Yet he's my son,—poor, poor Bianca's son.
Shall I not curb my fretful nature, when

I think of him?—Ah! yes—I'll strive to think
Not ill of him.—He bears an honest shew.
Were this a time for questioning, I'd ask
Touching those letters, and Vitelli's plots—
'Tis not;—perhaps to-morrow. If he should
Have been abused.—How much his pallid smile
Shone like Bianca's. Oh! I'll love him yet;
And he shall love me too: and yet—and yet—
Ah! thus my fiery and suspicious nature
Preys ever on itself.—I *will* be calm. [*Exit.*

SCENE I.

A Chamber in the Palace.

ISIDORA *and* ISABELLA *enter.*

Isab. Dear sister, had your face little more mirth
How much you'd grace the feast.
Isid. Must I then wear
A mask, my lady?
Isab. No: no need of that.
But what has troubled you?
Isid. O, nothing, nothing.
Isab. Nay, now you deal not fairly with my love.
Isid. Well, he—Lord Guido has been with me.
Isab. Yes.

Isid. He's full of grief: that's all. I did not weep
For that.

Isab. He must not shew this sorrow at the feast
To-day: The Duke is quick, and apt to doubt.
Bid him be cautious there

Isid. We will not meet
Again, tho' we had purposed. Guido has
Told all: one word unto his old regard
He gave, and so we parted.

Isab. This I know.

Isid. You know.

Isab. Ay, my sweet sister: I have seen,—
Had you but seen him, too, and heard him sigh,
It would have moved you. When he said he had
Not even a token to remember you,
I promised—

Isid. What?

Isab. Be not alarmed, dear sister,
But I believe, I promised one: Indeed
Some message you should send, for if a word
(An idle word) escape by chance to-day—
The Duke is jealous.

Isid. Ah! whom can I trust?

Isab. True;—all about the Duke are cunning; stay—
I'll be your messenger; but you must give
The token for him: else he'll not believe.
What bauble shall it be, sister? Ha! this,—
This will be excellent.

Isid. Not that. If you
Must have some pledge, take this: that ruby ring
Was the Duke's gift, and 'tis a favourite.
Isab. Shame!
He will not recognize so poor a thing
As this for your's. Give me your hand; in faith
It is a white one. Now, were I a man
I'd kiss it, sister, thus. [*Takes the ring.*
Isid. Nay, nay; return
That ring to me: I pray you—do return it.
Isab. What shall I say to him?
Isid. Give me the ring.—
The ring.
Isab. I'll trust then to my thoughts; and I
May strengthen your entreaties with my own.
Should he look sad on you, or smile, the Duke
Would madden with strange fears, believe't.
Isid. Indeed,
I did not know that he—Hark! hark! who comes?
Isab. Perhaps the Duke.
Isid. Ha! then I'll leave you—nay, I must. [*Exit.*
Isab. Farewell. I hate her not, tho' her pale face
Reproaches me. Poor victim! she is in
My toils,—but 'tis to make my child a prince.
That base-born,—he has been preferr'd to mine,
I and my rights were trampled down—ha! now for
My message.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. Must I then put on a look,

And say I am content to all that is,—
To all that has been? Well, 'tis for *her* sake;
And what would I not do for her, tho' she—
She has abandoned me. Poor girl, poor girl!
It is too late to grieve.
Isab. What study's this?
Dear Guido, are you plotting?
Guido. How! I am
As innocent—
Isab. Against the Duchess and the Duke? nay, nay,
I know
All, Sir; your meetings, and her tears. Beware
The Duke.
Guido. My heart's as innocent—
Isab. I know it, but the Duke
Is jealous;—that's the word: and you must not
Awaken him. See; do you know this ring?
'Tis Isidora's.
Guido. Ha!
Isab. She sent it to you.
I told her of your grief—(Nay, do not chide,)
And got this—it will serve, tho' love is over,
To bind your friendship fast.
Guido. She sends me that?
Isab. She sends you this, and bids you smile to-night.
Guido. I'll do 't: but 'twas not needful.
Isab. You will do
This for—

Guido. For friendship, Madam, and no more.

Isab. Take care 'o the ring.

Hush! here comes one who need not know it. Well!—
Well, father?

GHERALDI *enters.*

Gher. Madam, is the Duchess here?

Isab. She's gone.

Gher. The Duke is waiting, and the feast
Prepared. My lord, your friends are there already.

Guido. I shall be with them, Sir.

Isab. Come hither, father. [*They talk.*

Guido. A feast—for what? And yet 'tis always thus.
Why do I quarrel with 't? When a man dies
They feast and shout—and when a child is born:
And when a father thrusts his last pale girl
Into the arms of age (ah, death!) they feast,
Revel, and dance, and laugh, and mock the night
(The modest ear of night) with riot!—Oh!
Why should I quarrel with it? I am now
The puppet of the day—but I forget:
Now for his highness' feast—I will remember. [*To* ISAB.
Exit.

Isab. I'll follow you.

Gher. 'Twas a bright star that guided you to-day.

Isab. But should we not—Ha! let me think.

Gher. I have
Been with the Duke; he thought himself at ease,
But with a word I started him: he tried
To laugh away his doubts, and I agreed

That they were nought; and then *supposed* a case—
Isab. Ha! that was well.
Gher. But he sprung up
Sternly and bade me go: and swore he was
Content: and then re-echoed my own words,
On this I essayed again, but all his spirit
Burst forth, and I was ordered straight to quit him.
Isab. He says he's satisfied?
Gher. Madam, his tongue
Proclaims it; but his hand and troubled eye
Give fierce denial,—there's that in his heart,
Which some day must uproot it. But for the ring?
[*Music without.*
Isab. Come this way, and we'll talk: the feast is ready.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Banquetting Room.—Nobles and Ladies assembled.

JULIO *and* CASTI *entering.*

Julio. This is a gallant shew.
Casti. Indeed a fair one:
And yet, 'tis but a shew.
Julio. How do you mean?
Casti. Oh! nothing: merely what I say, no more.

Julio. In faith you puzzle me: ha! what a face
Look, my dear Casti. Do you see that girl
Whose hair is bound with pearls? her cheek is like——
Pshaw!—like—like——

Casti. Like a young rose opening slowly,
Kissed by the breath of May.

Julio. I love a rose.

Casti. *Sir, she was fashioned by the self-same hand,
And with more prodigal beauty than the rose;
Look at her, she will bear a closer glance.
'Tis old Cornelia's child, Camiola—
You 'love a rose'? Kiss her, she'll taste as sweet.

ISABELLA *enters.*

Julio. I dare not.

Casti. Right: I am her cousin, Sir;
But I will make you known.† Lord Guido comes.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. My father?

Casti. Is not come yet. Let me touch
Your hand.

Guido. Excellent Casti!—*Julio, look! My aunt
Has smiled for you this minute.

Julio. I am gone.

Guido. Am I the hero of this fête, dear Casti?

Casti. You are, and you must honor it.

Guido. I will:
It is the last.—Hark! hark! I hear a sound:

Oh! *she* is coming.

Casti. I hear nothing—nothing.

Come, be a man.

Guido. A wretch.—Now then you hear.

Casti. Ay, now: you're quick of ear.

Guido. Ha! ha! a man who's flayed alive will feel
The merest touch: 'tis thus with me: my ear
Hath drunk in burning tidings; scalding words
Have been thrust near my brain.† [*Music is heard.*

Casti. Your father comes.

Julio. Madam, the Duke is coming. Gentlemen,
His Highness.

DUKE *and* ISIDORA *enter.*

Duke. Sit; Oh! sit.—No more of this
Authority puts off her state to-day,
And for once, we are equal.—Where's my son?
Gentlemen! Friends! I give you all a welcome.
Where is my son?

Guido. My lord!

Duke. Here is an old
Acquaintance, Isidora. Give my son
Welcome. He smiles upon us. [*Aside.*

Isid. Welcome, my lord!

Guido. Madam, I thank you.

Duke. Ha! Count Casti! you
Are known unto my wife; is it not so.

Casti. Slightly I have been honored.

Isid. Welcome, Sir,
Unto Mirandola. The Duke and I
Are glad to see so kind a countenance here.
Duke. Oh! bravely. I shall teach you soon to know
The customs of a court: but, rest you now.—
My friends! I pray ye, sit, and taste your welcome.
But how is this? There should be music here,
To greet my son after his battles.—Bid
The trumpet speak, and the fine thrilling harp
Chime in his ear, 'till every nerve is touched;
And let the flutes (like gentler voices) lend
Their pleasant tones, and the rich viols make,
With all their strings, harmonious noise to-night.
Strike forth, musicians, while the feast proceeds.

Chorus.

Welcome, welcome from afar;
This is thy own festal day.
Welcome from the toil of war,
Son of great Mirandola.

Julio. That was a pleasant strain.
Lady. Most pleasant Sir.
Duke. Stir not. [DUKE *and* ISIDORA *rise.*] O! fair
Camiola, take heed.—You do not wear
The ring I gave you, dearest. How was this?

Isid. The ring?

Duke. Aye, love: the ring I chose
From out a hundred, ruby cased in gold,
Shaped like a cross; I kissed it on your hand,
And swore upon that cross to love you ever.
Where is it?—But no matter; when we feast
Again, remember it—my favorite ring.

Isid. I will, my lord.

Duke. Now sit.—Give me a bowl
Of wine!—There is a troubled spirit still
Hanging about my heart. Some wine—enough.
I'll drown it quickly.—What a sparkling crown
(Beaded too royally) floats on the top
Of this clear liquid now, and tempts my taste.
Guido, my son, health and fair life be yours;
Your father speaks it with an earnest voice.

Guido. But, for the heart——

Casti. Nay, now I disagree.
Methinks his heart is in it.

Guido. Excellent friend,
You always teach me well.—Father, I thank you.

Duke. There is a cordial something in that word.
Father!—'twas thus he spoke, for the first time
Since his return, I think: 'Father!'—How lovely
My young bride looks. Beautiful, beautiful love!
How fair—how utterly without a peer
She is!—Apostate that I was to doubt:

And yet I did not: no, no, no: I did not.
Is that Hypolito?
Hyp. Yes, my dear lord.
Duke. Oh! reveller!—
Sister, I have not noticed you; forgive 't.
My heart was full of trouble and deep joy;
Strange company, you'll say for one so wise
As I am thought to be: but so it is.
Isab. What was the matter with my sister?
Duke. When?
Isab. Just now: she seemed to shrink.
Duke. From me? from *me?*
†Oh! you mistake. More wine: fill high!
Gentlemen! a brave welcome to my son!
Guido, may discord never, never come
Between us.—Bring a goblet hither, Sirs,
And let him taste his welcome. Let the health
Pass round, and no one slight it. My dear son,
Give me your hand.—At Mantua once this——Ah!—
[*He sees the ring.*
Julio. Look!—What's the matter with the Duke?
Guido. My lord!
Hyp. Look at my uncle, mother!
Isab. Sir, be still!
Lord. Come forward—How?
Isid. My lord!—Ha!
Guido. Father, speak,
What means this?

Duke. Nothing. I am quiet—calm.
The heaven's are o'er us, and it may be—nothing.
It may be—Ha! begone!—Now, now, for ever
I cast aside goodness and faith and love,
No more to be put on—masks as they are,
To hide the base and villainous tricks of men.
Break up the feast! All leave us!—O bright Heaven!
Laugh you in scorn upon me! See it shines
Right through the windows, and the nodding pines
Shake their black heads and mock me.—Shall I swear
To kill? [*The guests go out.*

Guido. Father!

Duke. That is——

Guido. My lord!

Duke. A lie,
Monstrous and foul, not to be said or thought.

Isid. My gracious lord!

Duke. False painted thing, begone!

Isab. Nay—

Duke Sister, will you drive me mad—outrageous?
I am abused—abused, I tell you. Ha!
Now do you start?

Isab. Retire, sweet Isidora:
And you, dear Guido, bid Gheraldi come.

Guido. Poor Isidora!—What a fate is thine?

[Guido *and* Isidora *exeunt.*]

Duke. Just when I had forgiven—almost forgot
All his most insolent taunts, all, and her cold
Unwilling smiles that made—that make me mad.

I could have loved her—like a fiery star,
I could have bent before her from my path
And worshipped her as something holy.—Now,
O, now!—

Isab. Dear brother!

Duke. Still am I the Duke.
Must you too put aside respect? No matter.
I'll keep my way alone, and burn away—
Evil or good I care not, so I spread
Tremendous desolation on my road:—
I'll be remembered as huge meteors are,
From the dismay they scatter.

GHERALDI *enters.*

Gher. Gracious Sir!—

Duke. I wish to be alone.
O earth and heaven! so fair, so lovely, yet
To be a—wretch. Now for all future time
I'll hate all things which seem as they were true,
For then they're false, I know. What *I* am
I care not.—Father, draw you curtain down;
Those sycophant branches with their bending leaves
Mock me: they mock my misery—my pain.
O how my heart aches!

Isab. Brother, be composed.

Duke. I cannot.—Will you pour upon my brain
Oblivion, or sweet balm over my heart?
No: then you jeer me when you bid me still
Be calm.—Would I were dull as Lethe is!

Or dead—dead: that were better; yet not so,
For I will live to be a terror still.
Gher. *My lord!—
Duke. And yet,—were it not better, now,
To leave the world at once, and pass my age
In cell or forest?—this has been.†
Gher. My lord!
Perhaps the lady Isidora——
Duke. Slave!
That word destroys me—tears me,—heart and soul.
Cannot I dream, or sleep, but thou must be
(My black familiar) at my elbow? Monk!
I hate your fawning—(Sister, stay your speech,)
I hate your sly insinuating smiles,
Your tongue that mocks your eyes, and tells a tale
As foul as night. I will not trust that tongue;
No, nor your eye, for both may be—are false.
Audacious slave!
Isab. Dear brother, I must speak.
Duke. I've heard of men who in a moment have
Done deeds of blood; but I——I will not thus
Redden my memory. Leave us, Monk—Begone!
[GHERALDI *exit.*
Isab. Dear brother, you——
Duke. And you too go.
Go, Isabella:—Nay, it must be so.
Leave me to think.
Isab. Farewell! [*Exit.*

Duke. To think—of what?
Of hell and all its horrors; for this earth,
It seems, may have a hell as full of pains,
And burning torture as was ever hid
In the dark bowels of the rolling world.
Places there are, 'tis said, where ill-starred souls
Pine amongst flames. My flames are in the heart,
And in the head—the brain, and every nerve.
And every trembling muscle of my frame.
O this hot ague! and my parching tongue
Clings close and closer still, and thro' my eyes
Run blood and fire, and—Ah!—O false, false, false!
Hush! some one comes. What! shall the Prince be jeered?
I'll fly into some corner dark as night. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT THE THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Anti-room of the Duke's Apartments.

CURIO *waiting.*

Isab. (entering) Where is the Duke?
Curio. Now in his chamber, Madam:
But he has given orders that no one
Shall have admittance.
Isab. I *must* go to him.
Curio. Madam, you know how violent is the Duke:
He bid me keep the door.
Isab. Go in, go in, Sir,
And tell him that I wish to see him, straight,
The matter's urgent. Go, Sir. [CURIO *exit.*
Casti. (Without.) Where is Lord Guido?
Isab. How!

CASTI *enters with a letter.*

Well, Sir?—
Casti. Where is he,—Guido?
Isab. Where?

Casti. I must
See him directly. Can you not tell me where?
Isab. Perhaps—
Casti. Yes, yes.
Isab. And yet he will not walk
To-night, tho' 'tis his hour:—but he may be
In the confessor's chamber. Do you know 't?
Casti. I'll find it, Madam.
Isab. Yet it were as well,
If you should try the terrace first.
Casti. I'll do 't. [*Exit.*
Isab. That was well thought: now we have time at least.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. May I come in?
Isab. Come in: I cannot gain
Admittance.
Guido. I must see my father, Madam,
Let what will follow it.
Isab. Do you know yet
What caused my brother's frenzy at the feast?
'Twas strange!
Guido. Strange! It was madness.
Half of the ills we hoard within our hearts
Are ills because we hoard them. A fair tale
Will ever put down scandal, and the Duke
Wants but an open story. I will see him,
By Heaven!

Isab. Be patient!

Guido. Shall my heart be wrung
At every turn, and I know not the cause?
I were a fool indeed—Well, Sir, the Duke?

CURIO *re-enters.*

Curio. Madam, I dare not enter.

Guido. Fool!—then I
Will go myself.

Isab. No, no; I'll see him first. Trust me for once.
A woman's words———

Guido. Then linger not.

Isab. How's this? I've heard no noise.

Curio. Madam, nor I
For the last hour.

Guido. Great Heaven! what can it mean?

Isab. Has he not spoken?

Curio. No.

Guido. Nor moved?

Curio. He has not.

Guido. I will go in, let what will happen.

Isab. Stay!

Curio. I'll venture since it must be so, my lord.
But may I beg you to withdraw.—This way.

Guido. It cannot be.—Poor father!

Curio. This way, Madam:
And I entreat your silence.

Isab. Come: this way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Duke's Chamber.

The Duke is sitting alone.

Curio. [*entering.*] He sleeps: Hush!—no, wide awake.
My lord! the lady Isabella is here.
My lord!—He does not answer me. My lord!
Ha! Madam, Madam, enter—Look!

ISABELLA *enters.*

Isab. What's this?
Leave us. [*Exit* CURIO.] Dear brother, will you be the talk
Of your own servants? Give me your hand: how cold!
Speak!—why are you alone?

Duke. Alone—alone.

Isab Nay, this
Is idle.

Duke. Who—Ah! sister, is it you?
'Tis a cold day—dull as December.

Isab. 'Tis
Indeed a wretched day.

Duke. Indeed? Ah! now
I recollect.—Oh! mercy! mercy!—Hear
Heaven and earth and air, if I——if I——
But no, I will not curse them: thro' the world
A curse will follow them, like the black plague
Tracking their footsteps ever,—day and night—
Morning and eve,—summer and winter,—ever,
I would not be a wretch so followed for
The wide supremacy of all the air.
I'd not be such a wretch—O Heaven! O Heaven!
Am I not worse than they are?

Isab. Worse,—how worse?

Duke. Oh, more—more desolate.

Isab. Guido.

Duke. No more.

Isab. He asks to see you.

Duke. We will meet hereafter:
In the world, never. In the grave perhaps—
In the dark common chamber of the dead
We'll visit, where upon his shadowy steed
(Pale as a corpse) the speechless phantom rides,
Our king and enemy: there, friends and foes
Meet without passions, and the sickly light
That glimmers thro' the populous homes of death
Will be enough to find us. We shall know
Each other there, perhaps.

Isab. His was indeed
A grievous fault; but he may mend. He's shrewd,

And he may clear himself. Shall he come in?

Duke. No: and when I talk thus—thus calmly, you
Know well I mean my words.

Isab. Nay——

Duke. Nay; I am
As firm as marble: fixed as fate: no more.
*Now, what's the day's amusement? Is 't to hunt,
Or fish, or sail, or fly the falcon?—what?
Or shall we drop upon our knees and pray?†

Isab. He says he must be heard.

Duke. He must? Must!—Then
Bid him come in.

Isab. You jest.

Duke. Not I, by justice!—So—[*sits*] that's well. I seem
To sit in judgment. Were the world before me—
The sinner, and the saint,—the prodigal,
And he who hoards his gold, and they who give
Not even a thought in charity,—base slaves,
Stabbers and thieves, and parricides, I'd hold
The balance firmly. Isabella, go.
Sirs, bid my son approach.

Isab. I fear—well, well. [*Exit.*

Duke. There was a Roman who condemned his son
*To death. I'll pass a gentler sentence, tho'
I am myself the victim. It is strange;
But I do feel within me a calm glow,
As tho' the words I am about to say

Bore on their sound conviction. Can it be
That I have erred? Away, away:—if ever
I rise to hope I shall grow wild again.
Despair is better.† Hark! he comes; my blood
Is half in tumult,—yet I will be calm.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. Father!

Duke. Lord Guido, I am told you wish
An audience; is it so?

Guido. It is.

Duke. Speak on.
If you have suffered wrong and pray relief,
Why, you should have it.—If you have done wrong,
The church is open, and the gate of Heaven
Wide for a true repenter.

Guido. Oh! my lord,
I beg you to cast off this garb.

Duke. It is
The garb of justice; treat it with honour, Sir,
As you may hope to thrive. Well!

Guido. Why is this?

Duke. Why! have you aught to ask? if so, speak on.

Guido. My lord, I know not how it is, but you
Who (if I must speak truth) have wrong'd *me* much,
Assume the injured man. What have I done?—
You will not answer?—no?

Duke. Go on, go on.
I like your boldness,—not your spirit. Well!
Guido. What have I done, my lord?
Duke. What done!—but speak.
Guido. You think me traitor, as I hear; but surely
I were a sorry knave, to plot against
The state which will be mine.
Duke. Be not too sure.
Proceed.
Guido. That 's as you will, my lord:—but away with this.
My lord, my lord! I ask you, can I be
The same in soul as when we fought at Mantua—
Together,—side by side? I hate to name it:
But, did I not—I ask you, did I not
Once do you service?
Duke. Yes: I own to that.
You speak it doubtfully: you saved my life.
Pray, be not sparing. I can bear it all.
Guido. Have I deserved this, Sir? Great Heaven!
Duke. Silence!
You have affronted Heaven; and the sad day
(Now dying) leaves a blush upon the face
Of the great sky, faint as your honour.—You
Have practised against Heaven,—against me.
Guido. I have not, by my hopes: nay, hear me swear—
If I have done—done what? I know not what.
But if I ever gave you cause to hate me,—

If I have wronged you by myself, or e'er
Conspired with others,—plotted, writ, or thought,—
Nay, if I ever heard of foes to you
And lent them help or countenance—strike me down!
I call on you, bright Heaven! I call on all
Your terrible thunders and blue darting fires
Quickly to come upon me. If my words
Are false, strike me to nothing!

Duke. Well, Sir, I
Have heard.

Guido. And doubt me still?

Duke. Doubt!
If you have said? you have: why then good even.
Now we may go and pray.

Guido. Once more.—That ring—
(The Duchess' ring) was given me as a pledge
Of a pure friendship.

Duke. Ha!

Guido. Oh! my lord, do not doubt me.—Once more, Sir,
I ask you to remember what I was,
And now believe.—My lord!—Nay,—not a word?
Not one?—Then is my purpose strong. My lord,
I see that 'tis in vain to hope to stay
In quiet at Mirandola. Each hour
Would bring a host of troubles and of fears
On me,—or both, perhaps: and I've enough.
Therefore, unless your highness orders that

I must remain, I purpose speedily
(To-night, indeed) to travel.
Duke. Travel!—where?
Where do you think to travel?
Guido. I know not where: somewhere about the world.
What matters it where I am?
Duke. This is sudden.
Your resolution's sudden,—but 'tis wise.
You have my full consent,—my wish: what more?
Guido. Will you not say farewell?
Duke. [*rising.*] Shall you stop first
At Naples?
Guido. First at Rome.
Duke. Perhaps you may hear further from me there.
Guido. Yet say farewell.
Duke. Farewell.
Guido. Oh, Father, I
Am going far—for ever. This cold hand,
Which now I stretch abroad towards you,—now,
You'll never touch again.
Duke. Farewell!—Mountains and seas
Must rise and roll between us: then, perhaps,
We may be friends again. I loved you once—
Once for your mother's sake; ay, for your own.
I had brave hopes, but you have blighted them;—
But I may write to Rome.
Guido. I hope you will.

Duke. If what I think is wrong: no matter, you
Shall hear from me at Rome.
Guido. At Rome, then.
Duke. If
My power, or my purse be wanting—ever,
(Death! I shall play the fool!)—if ever I
Can serve you, let me know, and 't shall be done.
This from my old affection will I do.
Some one has used me ill—some one has struck
And tortured me. Let me look on you.—You
Had always a brave look;—ay, from a boy.
Guido. I wore my innocence there, and in my heart.
Duke. Well, well; no more; you'll see the Duchess ere
You leave us.
Guido. No, my lord.
Duke. You'll see her? Nay——
Guido. 'Tis better not. I leave Mirandola
To-night.
Duke. But first——
Guido. Pray, spare me.
Duke. Then—why then
Fare you well, Guido; for it must come to that
At last.—Farewell! yet, wheresoe'er you go,
Still do not quite forget Mirandola.
You have had happy hours and pleasant thoughts,
And I—I have had some: in infancy
I—(tho' I was a prince) would not confide

My son to hirelings. I have stood and watched
You sleeping, (then I dared not own you, for
My father lived,) while poor Bianca wept.
Oh! I have watch'd you with a cotter's care,
Thro' many and many a night:—'tis so; and now
Mountains and stormy seas will come between
Our hearts. While you are wandering, I shall be
Shut in my palace,—prisoned up,—a slave:
What else are princes ever? but I'll write
To Rome.

Guido. I shall expect it.

Duke. Confide in me.
I thought I had a word or two to say,
But they are gone;—the common things, perhaps,
Men say at parting: likely nothing more.
You may return: if not, why let us part
Like friends at least: hate is a galling load
To bear in absence; so—farewell. Oh! Guido!
[*Embraces him.*
And now, no more. Farewell!

Guido. Once more, farewell,
Farewell! [*Exit.*

Duke. Farewell! The kindest breath of Heaven
Rest on your head and hallow it.—My son!
My only son! and is he gone for ever?
How *I have* loved him let these tremulous hands
Proclaim, and these my weeping woman's eyes,
Not often stained with tears.—Farewell, once more.

Son of my youth! And now I'll take one look
At the blue sky, and taste the scents which hang
Around the flowers.—Methinks I feel again
My stature princely, and still running clear
The high blood of Mirandola. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Apartment of the Confessor.

GHERALDI *discovered at a Table, with Papers; and a Chest open, to and from which he goes.*

Gher. Now, haughty lady, now indeed thy nets
Are closing round thy victims: but thou art
Thyself within my mesh.—I want thy help,
To thrust me in the conclave; until then
I'll keep thy secrets safely,—and thy letters.
Ha! this—[*Reads.*] "To Guido de Mirandola,
Naples."—That Gaspero had an honest look;
And yet he was a knave. This—"To the Father
Gheraldi." Signed "Thy true friend Isabella."
This is my bill on fortune—"thy true friend."
And here are Guido's letters to the Duke
I would not lose them for a mitre. But
There is another——Ha! [*Goes to the chest.*

CASTI *enters suddenly.*

Casti. Is not Lord Guido here?

Gher. Signior!—Lord Guido?

Casti. Ay, Sir, Lord Guido.—I must see him quickly. Why, what's the matter, Monk?

Guido. [*Within.*] In this room, say you?

Casti. Ha! that is his voice?

GUIDO *enters.*

My dear Guido! I want
Some private words—I want to have some speech
With the lord Guido, Sir.

Gher. With the lord Guido?

Casti. Death!
Do you not hear? We wish to talk in private.

Guido. You'll trust us in your room awhile, Gheraldi?

Gher. My lord,—my papers.

Casti. Never mind them, Monk.
How! do you think we wish to learn how well
You turn a cunning verse? leave 'em and go.

Gher. My lord, I must—

Guido. How!—I have spoken, Sir, [*Waves him off.*
Some minutes hence you may return.

Gher. But first— [*Seizes the papers.*

Casti. Begone! [*As Gheraldi goes, he thrusts the papers into his robe:—some fall, as Casti hurries him out.*

Casti. Now,
I have a message.
Guido. You must say it quickly;
For I am going.
Casti. Going—where?
Guido. I leave
Mirandola this hour.
Casti. For what? for what?
Guido. My friend, the Duke and I must part. Nay, spare me:
It is determined on. I go to-night.
Casti. To-night you must not; for the Duchess asks,—
Implores a meeting with you.—In my hand
I hold her letter: look! 'twas written with
A trembling heart.
Guido. Poor Isidora! so
Thy young heart trembled when it wrote to me.
[*Reads.*] Ha! Casti—stay, stay: how! to-night? to-night?
It cannot be: I've said——
Casti. And I have sworn,
Upon the Duchess' hand, that you shall see her.
You must—Oh! no excusing.
Guido. My dear friend,
There are some trials which the mind (tho' made
Ev'n hard by sorrow) cannot go through well:
Such one is this.

Casti. She wept,—do you not hear?
She wept and bade me as I loved her honour,
Her life,—to bring you to her.
Guido. How can I
See her? I go this hour.
Casti. You can, you can:
Cannot you leave your horses at the inn
(The first you arrive at) near the mountains? then
You can return alone, wrapt in your cloak.
Who'll know of this? 'tis easy. Why, the night
Itself will shroud you well.
Guido. But should the Duke——
Casti. Do I not tell you that perhaps her life—
Her very life's at stake.
Guido. Well!—
Casti. Well—you must do't.
Guido. We must be secret; yes,
We must be very secret,—but I'll do't.
There is a fate in this. *I seem to go
Calmly, yet with a melancholy step,
Onwards and onwards.—Is there not a tale
Of some man, (an Arabian as I think,)
Who sailed upon the wide sea many days,
Tossing about, the sport of winds and waters,
Until he saw an isle, towards which his ship
Turned suddenly?—there is: and he was drawn,
As by a magnet on, slowly, until
The vessel neared the isle: and then, it flew

Quick as a shooting star, and dash'd itself
To pieces. Methinks I am this man.†—But he it.
I'll go to Isidora.

ANDREA *and* CARLO *enter.*

Casti. Well!
Andrea. My lord,
Your horses wait.
Casti. Now?
Andrea. In the court, my lord.
Guido. Farewell, then: I shall see you once more.
Casti. You
Will not deceive me?
Guido. I will not, my friend.
I'll see you after I have seen her: now,
Farewell.
Casti. Farewell then.—I will stay
Here; lest our parting (colder than should be
'Tween friends) give rise to doubts.
Guido. Right.—Fare thee well!
[*Exeunt* GUIDO, ANDREA *and* CARLO.
Casti. Poor Guido!—I have done my task; altho'
I hate these secret meetings. What I do
I wish the sun to see; yet, I have been
A messenger to him:—Well, perhaps—— So,
[*takes up the papers.*
What have we?—the monk's homilies, or—Ha!

What !—to Lord Guido, signed by—by the Duke?
Death ! it all strikes upon me. This is not
[*opens the pacquet.*
A time for doubting. What is this? Ah ! Heaven !

GHERALDI *enters.*

Gher. I must have dropped some—Ha ! Signior !
My lord, this is not well. My lord, I say !

Casti. Begone, thou villain !—This (*reads*) from Guido to
The Duke?

Gher. Give me my letters, Sir.

Casti. Another !—How !
Oh ! mercy ! thou'rt betray'd, poor friend, betray'd.
Thou avarice bitten slave !

Gher. Give—give me but
Those letters, Sir, and you shall have——

Casti. Insolent slave !

Gher. Not for myself, not for myself, my lord;
But for the lady Isabella.

Casti. Ha !

Gher. She'll thank you—she'll reward you: you shall have—
I know not what.

Casti. By Heaven, her writings here
To you—to you, you mean, and loathsome worm !
Ha ! signed "your true friend Isabella."
[*He reads, holding the letters away from* GHERALDI.

Gher. Sir—
My lord ! my lord ! [*Clings to* CASTI.

Casti. 'Tis here, 'tis here! Begone! I see it now—
I see it all.—Oh, Guido! poor lost friend!
But it is here—thy proof! and *thy* proof too,
Thou double slave!—Begone!

Gher. I'll give you all!—
I have a mighty hoard—of gold—of gems—

Casti. Unloose me, villain!—This shall to the Duke!

Gher. My lord, my life is in it.

Casti. Guido's life:
His honor! but they shall be saved. Begone!

Gher. I cannot—will not.

Casti. Slave! Ha! villain, down!

Gher. My lord, I'll be for ever—I will kneel—

Casti. Hence!—Now we triumph.

Gher. Go not!

Casti. To the Duke:
Ay, to the Duke in triumph: Thou shalt be—
Begone!—Ha! villain!—Nay, then thus I dash
You down for ever.—Hence!—Now then, my friend,
Now victory is ours. Honor—thy father's love,
Saved, and thy princely name made clear for ever.
Now for the Duke.—Away!

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Apartment of the Duchess.

DUKE, ISIDORA.

Duke. Sweet, talk no more of this. Sorrow has past
Over us like a storm:—my heart is stilled;
And, though more lonely than I thought to live,
We'll make the best of life. *Poor policy
It is to shun the few bright hours that come,
'Cause more are absent from us. Let us be
Happy, love, if not gay.† Come; sit beside me.
Why do you stand, dear Isidora?

Isid. I——

[*Aside*] The hour is past: he must be waiting. Now
Excuse me.

Duke. Presently. Come sit by me;
And let me tell you once more how I love you,
How utterly and self-abandoned I

Gave my whole soul to you. Oh! pardon, then,
(Pardon for this devotion's sake,) that I
Ever pronounced a word that look'd like anger,
Fear, or a false mistrust. I gave up all:
Could I ask less than all? Why, what is 't moves you?

Isid. [*aside.*] How shall I pass?—I will return.

Duke. How 's this? have you lost aught?

Isid. Yes, my lord, yes. I—I shall not be long
Ere I return.

Duke. Well; go then, if it must
Be so: but take heed, dearest; do not walk
Abroad so late again. I would not have
Evil to meet you for—for the wide world.
Quickly return.

Isid. I will, my lord, I will. [*Exit* ISIDORA.

Duke. The calm I feel upon me is more like
A leaden grief than joy,—and yet 'tis joy:
Not the high buoyant spirit which lit up
Mine eye this morning: 'tis a sullen light,
But it has full possession. Every nerve
Is laden with a strange and lulling charm,
As tho' I had drank of poppies, yet alive
To the least touch. A sound would startle me.
Hark!—no.—What could my Isidora mean?
She trembled, yet she is not wont to tremble for
A trifling loss. 'Twas odd.—Again! Who's there?

Isabella [*without.*] Brother!

Duke. Come in, come in.

ISABELLA *enters.*

Why, what is this?
Are you not well?
Isab. Not quite. Dear brother, where—
Where is the Duchess?
Duke. Gone. She will return
Quickly: till then, remain.
Isab. Did she go out
Lately?
Duke. But now unto her chamber.
Isab. Then
It could not be; and yet—no, 't could not be.
Duke. What could not be?
Isab. Dear brother!
Duke. What is this?
Speak, Isabella.—By the gods, you seem
Born to perplex me. Speak out.
Isab. It is nothing.
Duke. Nothing?
Isab. Perhaps 'tis nothing.
Duke. I shall be
Vexed beyond all my reason. *I thank the stars
I am not of that humour which delights
In fretting this and that man,—thus and thus,
With question and no answer,—flat denial,
And then "perhaps," and "it may not be so;"—
I hate it all. By Jupiter, if I

Had now a secret (good or ill no matter)
Which it became a friend to know——
Isab. What then?
Duke. I'd speak it boldly.†
Isab. Then—why then—I cannot.
Duke. Gods! give me patience.—Isabella, if
You cannot speak, leave me; (I am not used
To talk thus, but you fret me.) Secret!—what?
What secret can it be? Ha!—no, no, no.
You asked me of the Duchess?
Isab. Did she go
Unto her chamber?
Duke. Yes.
Isab. You're sure of that?
Duke. Sure? yes; where else? sure! sure!
Isab. Then I am wrong.
Duke. Darkness and death! speak out—what is it?
Isab. Nay,
Be calm.
Duke. As the loud thunder:—Well; I'm calm.
Isab. I thought I saw
Beneath the moonlight————
Duke. Yes; go on, go on.
Isab. I would not tell you, but I cannot live
And see you wronged.
Duke. Go on.
Isab. I thought I saw
Guido, and——

Duke. Hell!—but no, it cannot be.
Isab. And yet, my servant, Pesaro——
Duke. Drag him in.
Isab. I'll bring him to you. [*Exit.*
Duke. Haste: make haste.—Oh, shame!
My son!—If it be so?—If it be—Why then
Come forth, thou power of Darkness! Come abroad
And shroud the world!- No;—rather let there be
Earthquake, and tumbling towns, and fiery rain,
Vapours, and spotted fever,—thick disease—

ISABELLA *re-enters.*

Ah! sister—Well; where is he?
Isab. Come in!

PESARO *enters.*

Duke. Now,———
Isab. Be calm. Speak, Pesaro.
Pes. My lord!—If I——
Duke. Plagues blister you. Villain, speak on.
Whom have you seen? seen what?
Pes. Lord Guido.
Duke. That
Is false: he has left the city.
Pes. Yes, my lord:
But he returned. I saw him near the barrier,
(Wrapped in his cloak) not half an hour ago:
And now——
Duke. I dream.

Isab. Well, well; you saw——?
Pes. Just now
I saw him in the garden.
Isab. And alone?
Pes. I think I saw the Duchess.
Isab. Now leave us.
Brother! [*Exit.* PESARO.
Duke. Look down, look down!
Isab. I should have thought
Less of this strange return, had I not seen him
(Yet why should that have struck me?) smile upon
That ring.
Duke. Ha!
Isab. When he parted with you—yes:
And then—how can I bear to name it? Yet,
Your court all smile and talk of this—their past
Love, and their—meeting in her chamber.
Duke. Ring! Chamber! I loiter:—I will have
Such—such revenge. Where is my dagger—where?
I cannot find 't; 'tis better. I will have
Vengeance in open day.
Isab. Nay,—[*Interposing.*]
Duke. Death and shame!
Away, away! [*Rushes out.*
Isab. He's gone.—I almost tremble.
And yet I will not. I, who never yet
Knew what it was to fear,—shall I shrink now?
He's gone, and they—no, no; he will not find

My victims soon.—My son shall be a prince.
A prince !—a noble sound.—I tremble still.
Who's there ?—What noise is that ?

CASTI *comes in suddenly with papers, followed by* GHERALDI.

Casti. Where is the Duke ?
Gher. Thank God ! he is not here.
Isab. What means this tumult, Sir ?
Casti. Oh ! lady you—
Are you there ? Shame ! where is the Duke ?
[*Enters an apartment.*
Gher. He has
Discovered all.—What shall be done ?
Isab. Hush ! I
Must think.—Meantime call you the guard.
Quick, quick ! Ha ! I must stop this choleric sir.
[GHERALDI *exit.*
Casti. [*returning.*] He is not there ; Madam ! Nay,
I must pass.
Isab. Ha ! —ha ! what is this outrage ? Guards !
Casti. By Heaven ! [*attempts to pass her.*
Isab. Within there—Guards, I say !

GHERALDI, PESARO *and Soldiers enter.*

Count Casti has
Forgot himself, and me. You will take care
The Count does not escape. Confine him, Sir,
Until my brother is at leisure. I
Will answer this : he has done outrage here.

Casti. I have some news, good Lucio,—news to tell
The Duke; so give me way.

[*Thrusts the papers in his bosom.*

Isab. Sir, take him hence.

Casti. Madam————

Isab. Away! [*Exeunt soldiers, &c. with* CASTI.

Gher. Madam, you are a quick contriver.

Isab. Now,
Let us go hence: no talk.—There is a thing
That now will soon be done; and then our cares
(My cares) are over. If I die, my son
Reigns in Mirandola. And yet, take care
The Count is safe.—I have a task elsewhere.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A Garden.—Clouded Moonlight.

GUIDO, ISIDORA.

Isid. When I wrote to you I knew not
That ye were reconciled. Oh! had I known
That you had left Mirandola, for the world
I'd not have put you in this peril: but
That ring—it seemed to me honor and life.

Guido. Not life.

Isid. Oh! yes, to me: his violent spirit would
Soon have destroyed me. Even now, should he learn

Of this our meeting—Oh! I fear, I fear—
Nay, give it to me.

Guido. My pretty ring! must you then have it?

Isid. Yes.

And 'tis not well indeed, my lord, that you
Should wear my favors now. Some busy tongues
May talk.

Guido. Oh! Isidora, is it come
To this? Must innocence so scant her looks,
Or modesty be dumb, lest the base crowd
Abuse her? *Oh! fair Heaven, they're bitter times
And doubtful when a breath of air may blow
Our names away.† But take it. [*Gives the ring.*] See—
I part with my last good, but 'tis to thee.
When I am gone—Shame on this blinding tear!
One drop, and yet how bitter!

Isid. Talk not thus:
You may return.

Guido. Oh! never shall that be.
*There is a period in the days of men,
Beyond which they never thrive. I have seen mine:
Now, all is darkness and decay.†

Isid. Alas!

Guido. Oh! weep not, weep not, Isidora. You
Had once a braver spirit.

Isid. I will try
To say farewell calmly.

Guido. Sweet blessings rest
Upon your head for ever!—I shall go
Afar; yet do not thou forget me. We
Have known each other long. Fortune has been
Our foe. Our very youth is gone before
It's time, and we must part.—*Oh! Isidora,
Think of me sometimes: amidst crowds and revels
You'll be a queen: pomp and admiring eyes
Will follow you, and delicate music, like
Incense from Heav'n, will haunt around your rooms.
Yet, in the midst of all do not forget
The mountain song we used to sing together:
'Tis long ago; but 'twas a pleasant strain.
I love it still; better methinks than ever.
Isid. Do not talk thus. I cannot bear it.
Guido. Nay,
Weep not. Poor Isidora!
Isid. Poor, indeed.
Guido. Give me your hand, once more.†
Isid. Oh! Guido! Guido!
Guido. We must part, dear friend.
And I must say—what must at last be said:
'Tis only—this:—I cannot, by the light
Of Heaven, I cannot say it. What! Farewell
To thee, whom I have loved—Oh! loved beyond
All words, all parallel, by day and night,
In health, in sickness, amidst toils and dangers——?
By heaven, I cannot do 't.

Isid. Hush! what is that?
Guido. O Night!
Isid. Hush!—no, 'twas nothing. Now—
Guido. Farewell!
Must it be so, indeed?
Isid. It must.
Guido. Why then
Farewell; and yet—there is a boon at parting
Which mere acquaintance to each other give:
Shall it be less with us? Oh! we have loved
Dearly and long.
Isid. That 's past.

DUKE *rushes in, and stops suddenly.*

Duke. I've sought 'em—Ha!
Guido. Nay, Isidora!—
Duke Ha! ha! ha!—Oh! Devils.
Winter, and blight, and famine strike ye down:
And fires, broad as the deluge, rain, 'till they
Scorch all the land up,—all.
Guido. Shun not my last
Request; it is my last.—*Tho' dark fortune puts
Her arm between us, every gentle proof
Of what has been, we need not cast aside.
Oh! weep not.—† Let me take one kiss away
In memory of thee—one: it will be
The saddest, yet the sweetest,—and the last.
Isid. No, Guido

Guido. Then farewell: shrink not.
Isid. I faint. Your father—[*Sinks against* GUIDO.
Guido. Tremble not. Where is he?

DUKE *rushes forward.*

Duke. Here!—
Here, serpents!—Now the everlasting curse
Cling to ye both and wither. May ye both
Wander about————
Guido. I————
Duke. Wretch!—wander about
The world,—the wide world, hopeless, vile, abhorred.
But no; for you—(will my head burst?) for you,
Delicate Sin, begone—yet stay: if e'er
You shall repent—repent of what? ha, ha!
Who's the accuser? none: who will believe
That I'm abused, abused? who'll swear? none, none.
Ha, ha!—O Death and Night!
Guido. Will you not hear?
Duke. Ay, when you die I'll listen,—I'll rejoice.
Will you have trial? never: there are crimes
Which the law touches not; but I'll have blood
Red as the Arab gulph: not your's, but you—
You with the curse of Cain—worse, worse—with all
The blight of parricide upon you—Son!
(No son of mine!)—Ah!—how my tongue is parched—
Dry as a withered scroll.—I will have such

Vengeance—such mighty vengeance.

Guido. Once more—nay—

Duke. Parricide!

Guido. 'Tis in vain.

Isid. Alas! Alas!

Duke. What! do you weep and cheat me of all tears?
But I'll have justice.

Guido. Yet hear!

Duke. Not a word:
No, not a word. I listened once, and died.
Ho, ho!—the world's abroad: lights! torches! so——
Come on, come on.

Guido. Spare *her*. For me—

Duke. For you
There is a something yet. Come in, I say.
My soul is white.—How my head throbs! Stir not.
Where am I?

CURIO, PIERO, *Guards and Attendants enter.*

Curio. Stay! What tumult is there here?
Your highness?

Duke. Where? The Duke is dead—is dead.
He died, Sir, when his wife and son forsook him:
But I am here to represent his state,
And it shall find full justice. Where's the throne?
Vanish'd, alas!—no matter. I will sit
Beneath the stars. *(sits)*—Roll back those curtains, which
Hide the pale visage of the moon. And now,
I call upon the assembled lights of Heaven;

And on the immortality of Truth,
Upon white Chastity, and crown'd Revenge,
To attest what here I do. Traitors! draw near.
What have ye—(Mark! the huge and ponderous sky
Hangs right above your heads,)—to say? Speak forth!

Guido. Father!

Duke. I'll not admit that voice; 'tis perjured. Hark!
Did it not thunder then? no: all is still—
Calm as despair.

Isid. *My lord!

Duke. Hush! Music.—Hush! [Isid. *comes forward.*
Ah! is it you?†

Isid. Spare him, O spare him!

Duke. Never.

Piero. If———

Duke. If a word is spoken, but a word,—

Guido. Nay, hear me.
That ring, that ring——

Duke. Ha! do you taunt me, villain?
Blights wither you!

Isid. Alas!

Duke. Come hither, slave!
You, sirrah! what's your name? no matter. Take
Yon man into the palace-court, and there—
Come nearer—near. [*Whispers officer.*
Remember!

Isid. (Shrieks.) Ha!—What's that?
Oh! mercy, mercy. Spare him—spare us both.
My lord!—O husband!
Guido. Sweet, implore no more.
My fate is come. I'll meet it as a man.
Of thee I dare not think: but *thou*—
Duke. Speak on.
You shall have licence,—once—but once. Speak on.
Guido. Thou hast abused
Thy trusts of father, husband, prince.
Isid. No, no.
Guido. Thou hast, to glut a base and bitter hate,
Destroyed thine only son. Angels now look
Upon us, and before their homes I swear
That I am innocent. Remember this.
For her who stands palely beside you there,
(A star amidst this darkness,) she is pure
As Heaven. I speak this with a dying tongue.
I loved her————
Duke. Ha! shall this be said? Away,
Away, I say! If once I swear—— [*Rises.*
Guido. One word,—
Isid. One word.
Guido. Poor Isidora!
Isid. One——
Guido. One word's enough. My lord, when I depart,
To where—no matter, mark me. I shall tread
With the same step,—the same bold, faithful step,

Which bore me on, 'midst fire and carnage, when
I saved your life at Mantua.—Now, lead on.

[Guido *exit with officers.*

Duke. [*Sinks down.*] He's gone.

Isid. A moment stop. My lord! my lord!
Spare him. I'll kneel to you, and wet the dust
With tears. Oh! husband, my dear husband! speak!
I,—Isidora—Isidora, whom
You loved so once, am here—here on my knees,
Before the world,—in the broad light. My lord!
Give him but time,—a word—(do you hear that?)
A word will clear him. Will you not listen? Oh!—
Cruel, oh! cruel! Mercy, yet;—oh, God!

[Isidora *falls before him.*

Piero. [*after a pause.*] Shall we not help the Duchess?

Curio. Stay, stay: he
Begins to move.

Piero. He looks like marble with those fixed eyes.

Curio. Ha! those are heavy tears.

Officer. Hark!

Duke. Mercy!—
No more of that. I am a desolate man:
Much injured; almost mad. I want—I'll have
Vengeance—tremendous vengeance. Ha! pale thing;
I will not tread upon her. Tears? what, tears?
Take her away.

Isidora *is taken out.*

My heart is cold as lead.
I should have had a cloak to cover me—
A tomb, a tomb, to keep the wind out. Ha!
I love this lonely pomp. My lamps are hung
All round a mighty dome; and music, like
The noises bursting from Æolian caves,
Come round me like a charm. Oh! I have been
Betrayed; ay, and revenged.—All silent? How!
Come, talk, Sirs, talk. [ISABELLA *enters.*

Officer. Will not your highness go?

Duke. Go? where? where? Ah! the light comes. I have been
Long wandering. Misery! oh, misery!
But justice shall be done; and vengeance. [*leans back.*

GHERALDI *and* PESARO *enter.*

Isab. Ha!

Gher. Madam, he has escaped.

Isab. Be still, Sir. Who?

Pes. Count Casti.

Isab. Ha! go seek him, and confine him:
Do this, and you shall thrive. This is unlucky.

Gher. 'Tis death.

Isab. Not quite so bad. Guido is gone
To rest.

Gher. How the Duke sits!

Isab. We'll lead him in. My lord!

Duke. Ah! Sister. Well; justice is done.

Casti. [*without.*] The Duke!

Duke. What voice is that?

[CASTI *enters quickly.*

Casti. The Duke—where is the Duke?

Duke. Here,—on his seat of judgement.

Casti. Seize the Monk.

My lord, pray pardon me, but—O my heart!
Madam, you must not go.

Isab. Slave! dare you think
To daunt the sister of Mirandola?

Duke. What's this?

Casti. You are abused.

Duke. I know it. Wretch!
Will you bring back my terrors? Silence him.

Casti. You and your son are both abused,—betrayed.
You and your innocent wife. Look on the Monk.
Your son's as fair as Heaven. Mark the Monk,
I say. Here, my lord, here are letters,—scrawls
Fashioned in hell, too black for such a place.
Here are the letters which you sent to Naples.
Look! these your son writ; these—your sister sent.
I took them from the Monk: he bribed, and prayed,
Nay, wept and tore my cloak to get them, but
I have them here,—read, read!

Duke. Letters? my son!—

Casti. He met the Duchess here by my entreaty:
Against his wish he met her: nay——

Duke. Ah, sister! [*reads.*]

Casti. Read, Sir!

Isab. Slave! my son
Reigns in Mirandola. I am content.

Casti. Lead out the lady.

[ISABELLA *is taken out.*

Duke. Now, where is she?—gone!
'Tis better. Ah! thou cowled villain,—thou
Whom I have loved and trusted. I forget:
Where am I? I am wandering yet.

Casti. My lord!
Where is your son?

Duke. My son? Ha! death and haste.
Fly, fly and save him. Bring him hither. Drag
That villain to a dungeon. O, my heart!
Fly some one! fly again, and bring my son.
Oh! mercy, mercy!

Casti. Where is he—his son?

Officer. Led out to death.

Casti. Ha! where?

Officer. In the western court.

[CASTI *rushes out.*

Duke. My son! where is my son? Is no one gone
To stop my orders? Go—some more. I'll sit
Here, while the Heavens are trembling.

(A distant report of Musquetry is heard.)

Ha! [*Sinks down.*

(*After a short pause,* CASTI *re-enters.*)

Casti. My lord!

Duke. Ha! my good messenger, a word, a word;
But one: I'll give my Dukedom to you,—all.
Tell me he lives. Swear it. 'Tis my command.
Casti. Alas! it was too late. We can but pray.
Duke. Rain down your blights upon us!
Casti. Sir, be calm.
Duke. Sulphur and blistering fire. I want to die.
Unloose me here, here: I'm too tight.—Some one
Has tied my heart up; no, no; here, Sir, here.
All round my heart, and round my brain,—quick, quick—
I'm burning.—Hush! a drug—a—
Casti. Hold him up.
Duke. Some dull—some potent drink. I'll give—I'll give
The world away for peace. Oh! round my heart,
And—Ah! unloose this cord about my throat.
Has no one mercy here? I am the Duke,—
The Duke. Ha! I am—nothing.
Casti. Raise his head.
Now, my dear lord,—
Duke. O my poor son, my son!
Young victims—both so young,—so innocent.
But they are gone. I feel as I could sleep—
Sleep—hush! for ever. My poor son!—

[*Dies.*

THE END.

EPILOGUE

(BY A FRIEND.)

SPOKEN BY MISS FOOTE.

LADIES!—Excuse me that I live—but I
Implored the Poet not to let me die;
An author's fate, I urged, would do as well,—
To be alive, and but insensible.

No Epilogue is written, so you may guess
The Poet's and the Manager's distress:—
I've seen much mingled fury and despair,
Stamping of feet, and tearing of the hair,
Lines penn'd and blotted out,—old verses read
To see what earlier Epilogues have said:
But not a couplet could their favour win,—
The deepest Tragedy is there,—within.
I, by the Manager's entreaty press'd,
Come to implore your hearts for the distrest.
It is not very willingly I do't,
But Mr. Fawcett says, "They'll hear Miss Foote!"

And will you hear her?—You have thought perchance
She scarce *should* speak after so deep a trance;—
But women love last words—the best of all.
Faintness and speech are not unnatural,—

Meek Desdemona, as I've heard and read,
(True woman!) "spake, after long seeming *dead!*"
Then may not I throw off my death-like grief,
And talk a little,—merely for relief?

How like you this our play?—be candid—come—
Say, is the Tragic Muse at all at home?—
'Tis said large Theatres the Drama mar,—
At least some *little ones* keep up this war;
But oh! I love the wondrous scene,—the dress,—
The state, that lends to sorrow, mightiness.
Give me to see ennobled Tragedy
In proud magnificence go sweeping by—
Her royal beauty deepen'd—and her grace
Made awful by fit circumstance and place!
No niggard stage becomes her gorgeous gloom;
Her soul, as King John says, wants elbow room.

But I forget my duty to the play,
And custom disregard;—what shall I say?—
Let me recal to mind some sterling rhyme
Of an "approved good master" of his time—
"When Learning's triumphs o'er her barbarous foes
"First rear'd the stage"—a plague on't—I must close
This sombre task. I really cannot speak
The Epilogue—I'll learn one by next week.

In the meantime, kind friends, allow our play
To live without it till another day.

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